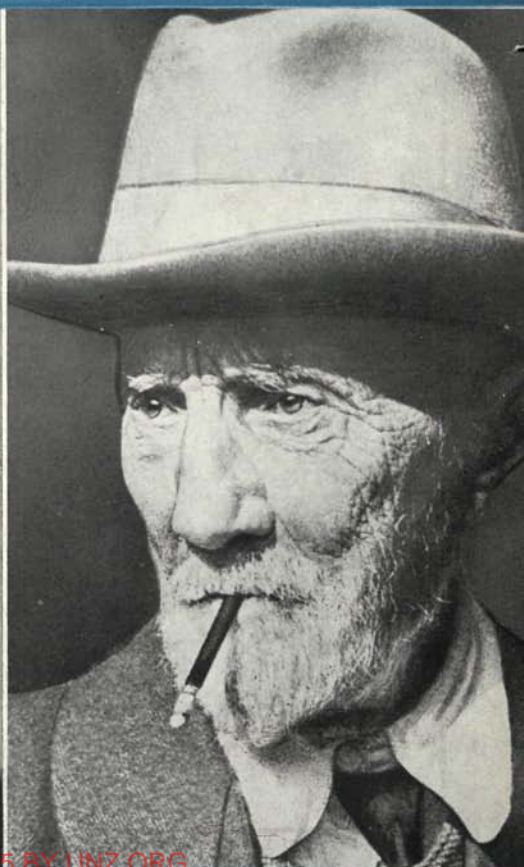
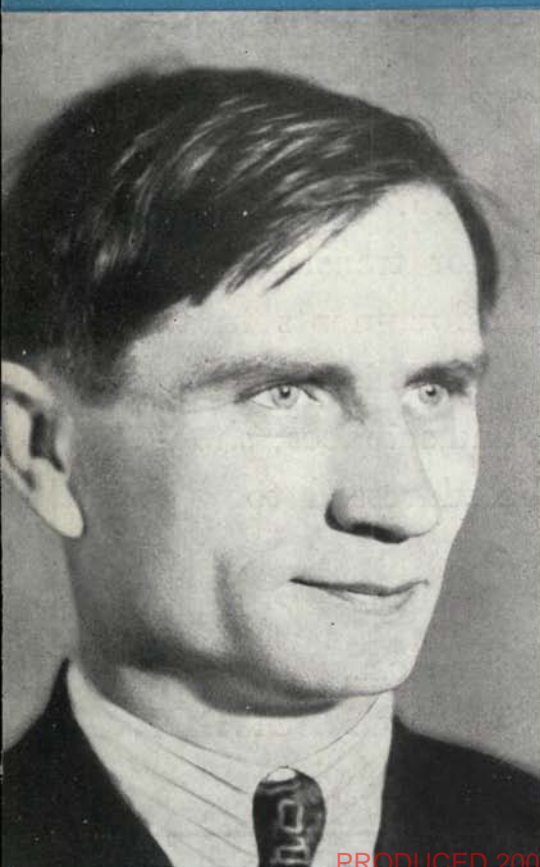


# THE ANGLO SOVIET JOURNAL



# PROBLEMS OF SOVIET AESTHETICS

A transcript will be available shortly of the discussion held at the S.C.R. on December 11th, 1948, under the chairmanship of Professor J. D. Bernal, F.R.S. Enquiries for this, and for translations of the main documents in the recent Soviet discussions on the arts and sciences, should be addressed to

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# THE ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL

*The Quarterly Organ of*

The Society for Cultural Relations between the Peoples of the British Commonwealth of Nations and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The Society is a non-political organisation, founded in 1924, to diffuse information in both countries on developments in science, education, philosophy, art, literature, and social and economic life. It organises lectures, concerts, film shows, exhibitions, &c., and has the largest collection in Britain of information on cultural aspects of the U.S.S.R. Its library contains volumes in English and Russian, and members are entitled to take out books on loan, as well as to obtain reduced admission to many of the Society's functions and a reduced subscription to *The Anglo-Soviet Journal*. The minimum subscription is 5s. per annum.

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# PROBLEMS OF SOVIET ÆSTHETICS

*(The following discussion was held in March, 1948, by the Academy of Social Sciences attached to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It is given here as an example of Soviet artistic controversy, and as a useful reminder that discussions of this kind are continuous and frequent in the U.S.S.R., and the questions dealt with not disposed of once and for all by some "decree" from on high.)*

*This particular discussion, which has been condensed from "Voprosi Filosofii," No. 1 of 1948, has been chosen as being of convenient length, but there are in the S.C.R. Library, and in some cases available for purchase, translations of other papers.)*

## Opening Statement by M. M. Rosenthal

THE undeveloped state of our theory of æsthetics is one of the reasons for the shortcomings in literature and art.

Æsthetics is the science of the laws of artistic development and of the principles of artistic creation. Like all sciences, it is historical, being the result of philosophical generalisation of particular stages in the development of art. As the theory of art, it is of great importance for artistic creation, since it arms the artist with a definite ideology, points out general principles, and links art with the class struggle and the Party.

Æsthetics is the theoretical foundation of art criticism. A criticism which is not based on a scientifically developed theory becomes subjective, arbitrary, without principle and dependent on the senses.

Soviet æsthetic theory has critically transmuted all that is valuable in the æsthetic theories of the past, particularly the ideological inheritance of the Russian revolutionary democrats of the 19th century. It generalises the experience of socialist art, which, arising for the first time in history, deals with completely new social relations, morality, and heroic figures. The greatness of our epoch is reflected in the art of socialist realism.

Soviet æsthetics is founded on a materialist interpretation of history. Its aims as a science is to arm Soviet art, artists, and cultural workers, with a clear and accurate Marxist æsthetic conception, and to inculcate a healthy artistic taste in the people of the U.S.S.R. corresponding to the structure of the whole of Soviet society. During the discussion on Soviet philosophy,

Comrade Zhdanov\* spoke of the necessity of a fighting offensive against the remnants of capitalism in people's consciousness. The rôle of Soviet art in this task is to develop a socialist consciousness among the masses and to educate the people in the selfless spirit of Soviet Communist patriotism.

The ideologists of dying bourgeois art moan *ad nauseam* about the Communist Party's "interference" in the "free" sphere of artistic creation. They are unable and unwilling to understand that, in the Communist Party's struggle to find the right way of development for Soviet art, there has been abandoned the old lordly, anarchist, individualist view of art as creative work for a chosen few, as a realm inaccessible to the ordinary mass of the people—a view which flourishes in the soil of bourgeois society and is fatal for art.

Soviet æsthetics must criticise contemporary bourgeois æsthetic theory, which reflects the disintegration of capitalist art; must struggle against formalism and other manifestations of decadent art; and must define the relationship between Soviet socialist art and the classical heritage.

For many years a fierce battle has raged round the place of the heritage of the past in Soviet art. Many representatives of the pre-revolutionary bourgeois intellectuals tried to foist on to Soviet art, in its earliest days, the stock-in-trade of the bourgeois formalists, in the name of "innovation." By setting its face against formalism and naturalism, and concentrating on classical realism as the most valuable element in the art of the past, the Party raised to a higher plane the struggle for progressive art waged by

\*Translation published in Political Affairs (U.S.A.), Vol. XXVII, No. 4, p. 344-366 (1948). Journal reference "Bolshevik," 1947, No. 16, p. 7-23. Available in S.C.R. Reprint. Members, 1s. 6d., post free; non-members, 2s. 6d.

Belinsky\* Herzen, Dobrolyubov, and, in his best works, Plekhanov.

Soviet art owes its present success to the Party's stand against the numerous groups and coteries (ranging from the Futurists,† Bogdanovites, and the Constructivists, to the Litfront and vulgar sociologists (such as Fritsche and Pereverzev), who were pushing Soviet art to the abyss of bourgeois modernism. Nevertheless, remnants of this attitude, and of an idealist approach to art, still exist in Soviet literature, art, and music. The struggle against them to-day, when the world is dividing into the hostile camps of democracy and imperialism, is bitter and politically important.

Because the principles of Marxist aesthetics have not been sufficiently worked out, our criticism has not been able to evaluate the heritage of the past, or to combat the formalist influence and remnants of liberalism in Soviet art.

**D**EVELOPMENT of the classical heritage does not mean reviving it together with its weaknesses. Socialist realism is a new form, reflecting a fundamental turning point in the development of social relations. The new art of a freed people produces the highest form of artistic realism—socialist realism. This is the kernel of Soviet aesthetics: we must define the distinction between Socialist realism and all other forms of artistic realism in the past—a distinction not always clear to our literary men and art theorists. Pavel Antokolsky,‡ for example, writes that perhaps the most important requirement of art is "the novelty of discovery" as opposed to "the familiar."

This demand for novelty in general, regardless of ideological content, leads to the purest formalism. Some critics (B.

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\*Vissarion Belinsky (1811-48), Nikolai Dobrolyubov (1836-61), Alexander Herzen (1812-70)—Russian literary critics, 19th century revolutionary democrats and social thinkers. Georgi Plekhanov (1856-1918)—One of the founders of Russian Social-Democracy and Marxism, writer on problems of aesthetics, culture, and history.

†Groups of extreme pseudo-Left workers in the intellectual field, appearing soon after the 1917 Revolution and maintaining their sway in the early 1920s. Lost influence after 1930.

‡Poet. Born 1896. Biographical material on life and work in "Soviet Writer's Reply" (S.C.R. 2s.), as well as his answers to questions put by British writers. Stalin prize-winner. Article on poetry and culture in journal "Znamya" No. 1, 1947. Comments on his reviews of work in "Novy Mir" No. 5, 1948.

Byalik\* and others) define socialist realism as a kind of synthesis of old trends—realism together with romanticism. They consider this the whole difference between Soviet art and the art of the past, in which these trends were separate.

They emphasise the importance of romanticism in Soviet art, and it unquestionably contains the beginnings of a revolutionary romanticism. These beginnings, enabling us to depict the to-morrow of our society, stem from the very nature of our kind of realism, which arises out of the heroic character of Soviet life. Byalik wrongly maintains that this revolutionary romanticism appears because realism is flat, empirical, and naturalist. He has described a socialist realism *without* realism, talking about anything in the world except reality, except the need to know it, study it, and depict it truthfully. He drowns the understanding of the realist nature of Soviet art in abstract discussions about "thought."

The appearance in history of the proletariat, its heroic struggle against capitalism and to establish a new socialist system, brings fresh life to art and to realism, its most important trend. But this is not just a return of life—it is the truth of the new and only consistent realism—socialist realism. Only Soviet art can be realistic in the full sense, because of the tremendous changes which have taken place in the life of society and the history of mankind as a result of the October revolution.

Socialist realism is a method of art to reflect the new and the excellent in our reality, and to struggle for a new, Communist world. This must be the starting point for an aesthetic analysis of socialist realism. To call it a synthesis of realism and romanticism ignores its position as a new qualitative development, which for the first time in the history of art fuses ideology and artistic truth. The philosophical foundations of socialist realism make it possible for the artist to understand the dialectics of reality, to examine life as it develops, to feel the new and see to-morrow and to fight for the future. It demands of the artist, not only a truthful picture of reality, but also that he influences human consciousness in the construction of a new world, fighting against everything which hinders the advance of Soviet society and for the success of the great principles of Communism.

Hence the fundamental value of the best in Soviet literature lies in its realism, which is a socialist realism. One cannot ignore, as Byalik does, the essence of Soviet art and reduce the whole matter to a question of "raising" above reality the heroes of Soviet literature. This is to ignore reality, when all that is needed is to depict reality truthfully.

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\*Writer and literary critic. Specialist on Gorky. Articles in connection with discussion on socialist realism appear in the journal "Oktyabr" No. 11, 1947, and Nos. 2 and 5, 1948.

Continued on Page 32

# BIOLOGY IN THE SOVIET UNION

By A. G. Morton

THE Session of the All-Union Lenin Academy of Agricultural Science, held in August, 1948, was devoted to a discussion of fundamental biological theory, which centred round the conflict between two opposing trends in genetics, between the Weismann-Morgan-Mendelist trend, the basis of contemporary genetics outside the Soviet Union, and the Michurinist trend, represented by Academician T. D. Lysenko and his co-workers.

The main report\* (now available in English) was given by T. D. Lysenko, and after a lively, exhaustive, and hard-hitting discussion, in which the opposition had full opportunity to put their case, the Lysenko-Michurinist standpoint was fully endorsed and thus accepted as the future line of development of biological science.

This controversy has aroused much interest and not a little excitement among geneticists and other scientists outside the Soviet Union, and has also been made the occasion for a number of ill-informed and sometimes ill-natured attacks on Soviet science. A study of the detailed report of this conference (shortly to be available in English) is sufficient answer to attacks of this kind.

In the first place, the serious nature of the discussion is evident; the scientists and agricultural specialists from all over the Soviet Union who took part in it were fully conscious of the vital importance for the future progress of Soviet agriculture of a correct solution of the questions at issue. In the second place, it must be admitted, even by those who disagree with Lysenko, that he has made a very important challenge to current biological theory, which will require serious consideration and which cannot be answered simply by abuse.

Before giving an account of Lysenko's standpoint, it is necessary to remind the reader of the background of the biological controversy in the Soviet Union, since this is essential for a correct understanding of the questions at issue. The conflict between the Mendelists and the Michurinists has, in fact, been going on in the Soviet Union for something like twenty years, although only occasionally has any echo of it reached the British public, owing to the haphazard and often distorted selection of information from Russia by the Press and radio. Thus, to the

Soviet republic, the recent discussion represented the final summing-up and settling of a long and familiar controversy.

Furthermore, the theoretical decision in favour of Michurinism as against Mendelism was only taken when the question had already been settled in practice by the relative contributions of the two theories to the development of Socialist agriculture. Michurinism, as developed by Lysenko, made tremendous contributions to solving the problems of the collective farms, which were reflected in greatly increased yields of agricultural products. Mendelism on the other hand, is considered to have played a relatively insignificant role in the progress of socialist agriculture, and to hold little hope for the future. Any appreciation of Lysenko's theoretical position must take these facts into consideration.

The first part of Lysenko's statement is concerned with the criticism and rejection of the chromosome theory of heredity, which Lysenko regards as merely a development of Weismann's doctrine of the existence of a changeless hereditary substance (the germplasm or, in modern terminology, the genome), which bears the heredity and controls the development of an organism, but which is itself unaffected by the conditions of life of the organism and is passed on unchanged from one generation to the next.

The modern chromosome theory, for all its elaboration of genes and plasmogenes, is essentially based on the Weismann conception of a special hereditary substance isolated from the internal and external environmental conditions of the organism. It is, of course, recognised that certain definite environmental conditions are required for the actual development of an organism and for the realisation of its hereditary potentialities. What Mendelism denies is the existence of any effect of these environmental conditions on the hereditary material, and therefore the possibility of the inheritance of acquired characters is also denied. Changes in the hereditary material are indeed recognised, but these mutations are entirely fortuitous and undirected, even though they may be deliberately induced by the use of colchicine or X-rays.

LYSENKO rejects the basic assumption of Mendelism, the existence of an unchanging hereditary substance, because it is contrary to facts and is idealistic and metaphysical. It is inconsistent, for example, with the existence of vegetative hybrids which the Michurinists

\*Lysenko, T. D. *Soviet Biology*.  
Birch Books. 1948. 2s. 6d.

have produced in considerable numbers. It leads to the view that since hereditary variation is not dependent on external conditions, therefore it is fortuitous and without definite tendency. Such a theory conflicts with the fact of evolution by adaptation and selection, since in reality it either denies the existence of evolution, or reduces it to merely quantitative changes.

Such a theory also denies the possibility of directing evolution in such a way as to create new plants and animals for agriculture. The Michurinists have shown, however, that plants and animals can be changed by strictly directed selection. Mendelism, on the other hand, has proved in practice to be of relatively little significance for agriculture. This is especially true of animal breeding where Mendelism has never made any contribution, and is ignored by the practical farmer.

It is not possible in a short space to do more than indicate the basis of Lysenko's theoretical criticism of Mendelism, but enough has perhaps been said to show that it is neither frivolous nor superficial. This criticism does not mean that Lysenko rejects any of the observational facts of Mendelian genetics, or that he does not believe in the existence of chromosomes. "Naturally, what has been said above does not imply that we deny the biological role and significance of chromosomes in the development of the cells and of the organism. But it is not at all the role which the Morganists attribute to the chromosomes."

It is the positive alternative to Mendelism propounded by Lysenko which is, however, of greatest interest to biologists, and which is likely to awaken the greatest opposition. Whilst Mendelism makes an idealistic separation between hereditary substance and the rest of the organism, the correct materialist view is, according to Lysenko, that heredity is inherent in all parts of the living organism. This implies that the conditions of life of the organism must affect its heredity—in other words, that acquired characters are inherited. "Materialism requires the recognition of the inheritance of acquired characters." The proof of this is to be found in the facts accumulated by the Michurinists.

Thus Lysenko re-states unequivocally the Lamarckian belief in the inheritance of acquired characters. It is quite clear, however, that he does not thereby imply the inheritance of acquired characters in general. What he claims is that in *certain specific conditions* organisms can inherit changes induced by the environment, and that the Michurinists have begun to define the conditions in which this type of inheritance becomes possible. If established, this is obviously a matter of the greatest theoretical and practical importance. Biologists have long been attracted by Lamarckianism for theoretical reasons, but have been held back by the lack of definite evidence in its favour. Among botanists, indeed, Lamarckianism has often been almost in the nature of a heresy which everyone believes but no one likes to acknowledge. The establishment of the particular conditions in

which heredity can be altered has extremely important practical consequences, since it permits the creation of new varieties of animals and plants of agricultural value in a way that Mendelism, limited to the selection and re-combination of existing varieties, cannot do. This is the claim made by Lysenko for Michurinism.

**T**HERE are three ways in which heredity can be altered according to the Michurinists:—

1. By changes in external conditions at certain critical physiological periods—e.g., at the vernalisation stage.
2. By graft hybridisation and the "training" of plants by grafting.
3. By sexual hybridisation followed by directed selection of the progeny.

These methods are based on the work of Michurin, who himself created many new varieties of plants. Lysenko and his co-workers have enormously developed these methods and extended their theoretical and practical significance. This development has only been possible on the basis of the extremely developed nature of socialist agriculture and the close connection between Soviet agronomy and the work of the collective farms. Lysenko has always drawn the collective farmers into active participation in his work, and this is the reason for the rapid advances which have been made.

The theoretical principles of Michurinism, given by Lysenko, will probably be found the least satisfactory part of his statement by biologists. This is partly due to the use of old terms in a new sense, and partly to the provisional nature of the formulations. Theory has arisen out of practice, and there is no reason to suppose that Lysenko has given a final theoretical statement. Anyone at all familiar with his earlier writings will recognise that his thought has already undergone considerable development.

Biologists outside the Soviet Union cannot form any final judgment on Michurinism until they have had a chance to study the factual material on which it is founded. It is clear, however, that Michurinism has found acceptance in the Soviet Union because of its practical successes and that these successes are connected with its fundamental theory. The new trend in biology can no longer be ignored—its challenge will require careful study and the reconsideration of contemporary biological theory. In the writer's opinion, it opens up the way to great theoretical and practical advances in biology.

*The Session of the All-Union Lenin Academy of Agricultural Science registered the abandonment of the Weismann-Morgan-Mendelist trend, and the establishment of the Michurin trend in Soviet biology.*

*A few weeks later an enlarged meeting of the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. met to discuss the position and tasks of biological science in the Institutes and Establishments of the Academy. In addition to members of the Presidium there were*



present a number of Academicians, Corresponding-Members of the Academy, and scientific workers from its Institutes, as well as the Minister for Higher Education, the Minister for Agriculture, and the Minister for State Farms.

At the end of the three-day meeting (August 24th—26th) the President of the Academy (S. I. Vavilov) read the text of a resolution prepared by a group of members of the Presidium together with participants in the Session. After a short discussion, the resolution embodying a number of practical steps for the strengthening of the Michurin trend was approved by the meeting and adopted by the Presidium. Readers will be specially interested in the following passages from this resolution.

**R**ESOLUTION of the Presidium of the Academy of Science of the U.S.S.R. with regard to the position and tasks of biological science in the Institutes and Establishments of the Academy of Science of the U.S.S.R.

"The Session of the All-Union Lenin Academy of Agricultural Science has set a series of vital problems before Soviet biological science, the solution of which will contribute to the great work of socialist construction."

"... The material of the Session very clearly showed that in biological science a conflict had been going on between two trends diametrically opposed in their ideological and theoretical attitudes: the struggle of the progressive, materialist, Michurin trend against the reactionary, idealist Weismann-Morganist one.

"The Michurin trend, which has constructively enriched the theory of evolution, and discovered laws of the development of living nature, has made an outstanding contribution to the practice of socialist agriculture by its methods of directed alteration of plant and animal nature."

"... The report of Academician Lysenko, which was approved by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, has placed before the scientists of the Soviet Union, and above all, before the biologists and representatives of the other branches of natural science, a series of new questions of principle which demand from the scientific establishments, a full and fundamental reconstruction of the work of research in biology and the real transformation of biological science into a mighty weapon with which to change living nature in the interests of the construction of a Communist society.

"... The Presidium of the Academy of Science of the U.S.S.R. resolves:—

1. To release Academician L. A. Orbeli from the duties of Academician-Secretary of the Department of Biological Science. Temporarily (until election by general assembly) to place the duties of Academician-Secretary on Academician A. I. Oparin. To include Academician

T. D. Lysenko in the Bureau of the Department of Biological Science.

2. To release Academician Shmalhausen from the duties of Director of the Severtzov Institute of Evolutionary Morphology.
3. To close down within the Institute of Cytology, Histology, and Embryology, the cytological laboratory under the direction of Correspondent-Member N. P. Dubinin, because of the adoption of an anti-scientific attitude which proved its barrenness over a number of years. In the same Institute, to close down the laboratory of botanical cytology as having the same incorrect unscientific trend. To close down the laboratory of phenogenesis in the Severtzov Institute of Evolutionary Morphology.
4. To place on the Bureau of the Department of Biological Science, the duty of revising the plans of scientific research for 1948–1950, bearing in mind the elaboration and development of Michurin's teaching and the subordination of the scientific research of the establishments of the Biological Department to the needs of the national economy of the country.
5. To place on the Editorial Council and the Department of Biological Sciences, the duty of preparing during 1948–1949 a scientific biography of Michurin in the series "Classics of Science."
6. To revise the composition of the scientific councils of the Biological Institutes, the Editorial Collegium of the Scientific Journals, to remove from them the supporters of Weismann-Morganist genetics and to replace them with representatives of advanced Michurin biological science.
7. To entrust to the Department of History and Philosophy the inclusion, in the plan of work of the Department, of works on the theoretical generalisation of the Michurin trend in biology, and criticism of the pseudo-scientific Weismann-Morganist trend.
8. To entrust to the Bureau of the Department of Biological Sciences, the re-examination of the structure, trend of work, and staff of cadres of the scientific establishments of the Department. To present within a month a proposal for the reorganisation of the Severtzov Institute of Evolutionary Morphology and the Institute of Cytology, Histology, and Embryology.
9. The Editorial Council within a month to revise the publication plans so as to ensure that scientific works of the Michurin School of Biology are published.
10. The Department of Biological Science to organise in October, 1948, an extended session devoted to the problems of the development of Michurin's teaching. This session to be arranged with the participation of the All-Union Lenin Academy of Agricultural Sciences, the biological establishments

of the Academies of the Republics, affiliates and bases of the Academies of Science of the Soviet Socialist Republics.

11. To entrust to the Bureau of the Department of Biological Science the revision of the plan for training post-graduate students at the Institutes of the Department of Biological Science, the need to develop the Michurin School of Biological Science being taken as a guide in the task of training scientific cadres.
12. To publish the material of the extended meeting of the Presidium in the next number of the Journal of the Academy of Sciences.

**T**HE Department of Biological Sciences, of which Academician Oparin replaces Academician Orbeli as Academician Secretary, administered, according to the Academy Handbook of 1945, twelve institutes, seven laboratories, three research stations and the chief Botanical Gardens, and was also responsible for four commissions and three All-Union Societies.

**Orbeli, L. A.** (b. 1882, Erivan). Physiologist. Was made corresponding member of the Academy in 1932, and Academician in 1935. He is a Stalin Prize-winner, First Vice-President of the Academy of Sciences, Director of the Pavlov Physiological Institute, Leningrad, and was Academician-Secretary of the Department of Biological Science. He has recently been appointed head of the Special Commission set up by the Leningrad Physiological Society to organise the centenary celebrations of the birth of the famous Russian physiologist, Ivan Pavlov (b. 1849, d. 1936).

At the session of the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences, the President of the Academy, S. I. Vavilov, in summing up before presenting the resolution, said of L. A. Orbeli: "Academician Orbeli has to conduct very great and very responsible work in the Academy of Sciences and in other establishments, mainly in Leningrad. In this important period through which Soviet biological science is now passing, a considerable expansion in the work of directing the Department will undoubtedly be needed. Therefore I consider that it would be correct to relieve Leon Abgarovich from his duties as Academician-Secretary of the Department of Biological Sciences. Temporarily, until election by the General Assembly, I put forward the proposal that the duties of Academician-Secretary be placed on Alexander Ivanovich Oparin."

**Oparin, A. I.** (b. 1894, Uglich, Yaroslav region), was elected corresponding-member of the Academy in 1939 and Academician in 1946. Specialist in biochemistry of plants. Deputy Academician-Secretary of the Department of Biological Sciences. An English translation of his book "The Origin of Life" was published in 1938. (Oparin, A. I. "The Origin of Life." Macmillan. New York. 264 pages.)

## AUTUMN FASHION SHOW

**T**HE Soviet Ministry of Light Industry organises exhibitions of the latest fashions, which are examined, criticised, and approved by a jury chosen from the public.

At the Autumn Exhibition about 2,000 models of dresses, costumes, and coats were presented by fashion artists from the model houses of the different republics and the largest cities such as Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Tbilisi, Riga, Sverdlovsk, Minsk, Gorky. . . .

The jury included specialists from clothing factories, dress designers, and artists, side by side with factory and office workers, intellectuals, and housewives.

The fashion show demonstrated dresses for work, evening gowns, sports suits, sea-side ensembles, and so on.

The artists have made skilful use of the cut, colour combinations, and embroidery characteristic of national costumes traditional among the peoples of the Soviet Union, adapting them with great taste to modern designs. It was this type of model that was most popular.

The Leningrad Model House, for instance, displayed a ski suit, with embroidery designs in coloured wool borrowed from the peoples of the Far North. Enthusiastic applause greeted a gown in which elements of Slavic national costume (the wide skirt and embroidered waistcoat) were adapted to modern elegance.

The Moscow Model House displayed a number of delightful children's coats for various ages, each one containing some element of national costume.

The Tbilisi Model House showed new fashions in evening gowns designed along lines characteristic of the Georgian national costume.

None of these models, however, was purely a copy of a "museum piece." Soviet artists adapted the national features with great skill, enriching the clothes of to-day with embroidery and original lines.

Many of the fashion designers demonstrated models which could be modified or changed at will: costumes consisting of several parts, permitting varying combinations. For example, the Moscow Model House displayed an interesting blue-and-white striped dress designed by Makarova, which could be adapted for at least six different purposes.

Many model houses displayed school uniforms for boys and girls, for the opening of the school year.

The exhibition showed, among other things, that this year the textile industry is producing more varied patterns in silk and cotton fabrics, and more interesting weaves in woollen materials.

# THE SEVEN MAGIC PETALS

By V. Katayev

*Valentin Katayev was born in Odessa, January 28, 1897. He began writing verses while at school and had some published when still a youth. He turned to satire during the Revolution, when he fought with the Red Army against the Germans on the Ukrainian front.*

*After the Civil War he moved to Moscow and became a regular contributor of sketches, tales and verses, and satirical work in "Gudok" and other journals, including "Krokodil." His works include "The Embezzlers" (1927)—a satire on the N.E.P. period; "Squaring the Circle" (play); "Forward, Oh Time" (1930's after working in the Urals); "Lone White Sail" (first part of a trilogy on his generation); "Son of the Regiment" (1941-45 war novel).*

*He has had plays staged at the Vaghtangov and Arts Theatres, and is Deputy Art Director of Repertoire at the Moscow Theatre of Satire. A good deal of his work is available in translation in the Library of the S.C.R., and most of the Russian.*

ONCE upon a time there was a little girl called Zhenia. One day her mother sent her for some biscuit rings. Zhenia bought seven—two for Daddy with carraway seeds, two for Mummy with poppy seeds, two with sugar for herself, and one little pink one for her little brother Pavlik. She took the string of biscuits and set off for home; but she dawdled by the roadside, read the signposts, and counted crows.

Meanwhile a strange dog was following her and eating up all the biscuits. First he ate Daddy's with the carraway seeds, then he ate Mummy's with the poppy seeds, and her own, with the sugar on them. Zhenia thought that the string was getting very light indeed, and she looked round. Too late! The string was dangling empty—the dog had just eaten the last biscuit—the pink one for Pavlik—and was licking his chops.

"Oh, you naughty dog," cried Zhenia, and she dashed off to catch him.

She ran and ran, but could not catch the dog, and instead lost herself. She saw that she was in an entirely strange place. There were no big houses, only little ones. She was frightened and started to weep. Suddenly a little old woman appeared.

"Little girl, little girl, what are you weeping for?" And Zhenia told the little old woman everything.

The little old woman said she was sorry, and took Zhenia to her little garden and said:

"Never mind, don't you weep, I'm going to help you. It's true, I have no biscuits, nor money, but I have a little flower in my

garden which is called 'Seven Magic Petals,' and it can do anything. I know that you are a good little girl even if you do like to dawdle by the roadside. I am going to make you a present of the 'Seven Magic Petals' flower and it will make everything right for you."

Then the little old woman plucked a beautiful flower like a daisy from the flower bed and gave it to Zhenia. The flower had seven transparent petals, each of a different colour: yellow, red, blue, green, orange, violet, and azure.

"This is not an ordinary flower," said the little old woman. "It can do anything you want it to. You only have to pluck out one of the petals, toss it in the air, and say:

*"Little Petal fly away  
To the North, South, East and West,  
Then return, and my behest  
All the world must obey!  
I command that this, or that, be done!*

And it will be done right away."

Zhenia thanked the little old woman politely, went out through the wicket gate, and suddenly remembered that she did not know the way home. She wanted to turn back to the garden and ask the little old woman to take her to the nearest militia man—but there was neither garden nor little old woman, just as though they had never been.

What now? Zhenia was just getting ready to cry, as usual, and her nose was already wrinkling like a little accordion, when suddenly she remembered the magic flower.

"Well, now we shall see what this flower, 'Seven Magic Petals,' is all about!"

Zhenia quickly plucked out the yellow petal, tossed it in the air, and said:

*"Little Petal, fly away  
To the North, South, East and West.  
Then return, and my behest  
All the world must obey!  
I command that I am home with the  
biscuit rings."*

She had hardly time to finish speaking when, in the twinkling of an eye, she found herself home—with the string of biscuit rings in her hand.

Zhenia gave the biscuits to her Mummy, saying to herself: "This is really a remarkable flower. We must put it right away in the nicest vase."

Zhenia was a very little girl, so she climbed on a chair and reached for Mummy's favourite vase, which stood on the highest shelf. And just then some crows flew past the window—they would! Zhenia naturally wanted to know right away exactly how many there were—seven or eight! She opened her mouth and started to count—on her fingers—and bang! Down went the vase and broke into little pieces.

"You've broken something again, butter-fingers," her mother scolded from the kitchen; "that's not by any chance my favourite vase, is it?"

"No, no, Mummy, I haven't broken anything. It only sounded like that," cried Zhenia, and she quickly plucked out the red petal, tossed it in the air, and whispered:

*"Little Petal, fly away  
To the North, South, East and West,  
Then return, and my behest  
All the world must obey!  
I command that Mummy's favourite  
vase is whole again!"*

And before you could say "Jack Robinson" all the little pieces were creeping towards each other and started to grow together.

Mummy came running from the kitchen, but there! her favourite vase was standing in its place as if nothing had happened. Mummy wagged a warning finger at Zhenia—just in case—and sent her out in the yard to play.

WHEN Zhenia reached the yard some boys were playing "Papanin Expedition": they were sitting on some old boards, and a stick was pushed into the sand in front.

"Oh boys, let me play too!"

"What next! Can't you see that this is the North Pole? We don't take little girls with us to the North Pole."

"What kind of a North Pole is that? Old boards!"

"They're not old boards. They're ice floes! Go away and don't meddle! We are in a very powerful ice-jam."

"You mean that you won't let me?"

"No, we won't. Go away!"

"All right, don't then. I don't need you to go to the North Pole. I'll go myself—to the real one. Bah!"

Zhenia went aside, and in the gateway she got the flower out and plucked off the blue petal and said:

*"Little Petal, fly away  
To the North, South, East and West,  
Then return, and my behest  
All the world must obey!  
I command that I am at the North Pole  
this minute!"*

She had hardly finished saying it when suddenly there was a whirlwind; it got terribly dark, and the ground started to spin under her just like a humming-top.

There was Zhenia, all by herself, at the North Pole in her summer frock, barefoot, and there's a hundred degrees of frost there.

"Oh Mummy, I'm freezing to death," she cried, and started to weep, but her tears quickly turned to icicles and hung from her nose as they do from a gutter.

Meanwhile seven polar bears appeared from behind the ice-floes and came straight towards the little girl, and each was more dreadful than the last: the first one was jumpy, the second one wicked, the third irritable, the fourth was shabby-looking, the fifth untidy, the sixth was pock-marked, the seventh was the biggest.

Frightened out of her wits, Zhenia clutched the magic flower with her fingers which were blue with cold, plucked out the green petal, tossed it in the air and cried with all her remaining strength:

*"Little Petal, fly away  
To the North, South, East and West,  
Then return, and my behest  
All the world must obey!  
I command that I am back again in our  
courtyard this minute!"*

And in the twinkling of an eye she found herself back in the courtyard.

The boys looked at her and laughed.

"Well, where is your North Pole?"

"I've just been there."

"We didn't notice. Prove it!"

"Look, I've still got an icicle!"

"That's not an icicle. Bah!"

Zhenia went home and had dinner. Deciding to have nothing more to do with boys, she went to another courtyard to play with little girls. When she got there she saw that they had a lot of toys: some had dolls' prams, some had rubber balls, others skipping ropes and tricycles. But one of them had a big talking doll wearing a doll's straw hat and doll's overshoes. Zhenia was vexed. Even her eyes turned yellow with envy—like goat's eyes.

She took out the magic flower, plucked out the orange petal, tossed it in the air, and said:

*"Little Petal, fly away  
To the North, South, East and West,  
Then return, and my behest  
All the world must obey!  
I command that I have all the toys in  
the world!"*

And all of a sudden toys started to pour in on Zhenia from all sides.

FIRST, of course, came the dolls; they had eyes which opened and closed with a loud click, and a never-



ending squeak: "Papa, Mama; Papa, Mama" . . . At first Zhenia was delighted, but the dolls came in such numbers that straight away they filled the whole yard, the street, two more streets, and half the square. It was impossible to move without stepping on a doll.

All around nothing could be heard but the chatter of the dolls. Can you imagine what a noise five million talking dolls can make? And there were no less than that. What's more, these were only the dolls from Moscow. The dolls from Leningrad, Kharkov, Kiev, Lvov, and the rest of the Soviet towns had not yet arrived, and were making a din like so many parrots on all the roads of the Soviet Union.

Zhenia was already getting a bit frightened. But this was only the beginning. After the dolls came rubber balls, marbles, bicycles, tricycles, toy tractors and motor cars, toy tanks of all sizes, and guns. Skipping ropes came creeping along the ground like grass snakes, getting mixed up with your feet and making the nervous dolls squeak still louder.

The air was filled with millions of toy aeroplanes, airships and gliders, and cotton-wool parachutists, like puffballs, came dropping from the sky, getting caught up in the telephone wires and trees. Traffic came to a standstill in the town. The militia men on point duty climbed the lamp posts and didn't know what to do.

"Enough, enough," cried the terrified Zhenia, holding her head; "that's enough! What is all this? I don't need all these toys! I was only joking. I'm so frightened!"

But no! The toys kept crowding in and crowding in. The Soviet toys came to an end—then the American ones started. The whole town was already filled to the rooftops with toys.

Zhenia ran up the stairs—the toys followed. Zhenia went on to the balcony—the toys followed. Zhenia climbed up to the attic—the toys followed. Zhenia jumped out on to the roof, quickly plucked out the violet petal, tossed it in the air, and said hurriedly:

*"Little Petal, fly away  
To the North, South, East and West  
Then return, and my behest  
All the world must obey!"  
I command that all the toys go back to  
the shops quickly!"*

And right away all the toys vanished.

ZHENIA looked at her "Seven Magic Petals" flower, and saw that there was only one single petal left.

"What a business! It seems that I have plucked out six petals—and not a bit of fun. Never mind, I shall be more clever from now on."

She went downstairs and walked along the street and thought to herself: "Whatever is there left now that I could order for myself? Perhaps two kilos. of jelly babies. No, better still, two kilos of fruit drops!

"Or no, I'd better do it like this: I'll order half-a-kilo. of jelly babies, half-a-kilo. of fruit drops, a hundred grammes of nuts, a hundred grammes of halva, and another pink biscuit ring, too, for Pavlik. But what sense would there be in that? Suppose I do order all that, and it's eaten up. Then there's nothing left. No, I'd better order a tricycle. But what for? Well, to ride around on; but what then? I'm afraid the boys will take it away from me. Perhaps even break it! No, it would be much better if I order myself a ticket for the pictures, or the circus. That would be great fun. Or maybe a new pair of sandals? But to be frank, what sense is there in getting new sandals? There are much better things to order than that. The main thing is there's no need for hurry."

Zhenia was discussing it with herself, when suddenly she saw a very nice boy sitting on a bench by the gate. He had big blue eyes, merry but calm. He was very likeable; one could see right away that he was not the kind that was always fighting, and Zhenia wanted to make friends with him.

Without any fear the little girl went up to him—so close that she could see clearly reflected in each of his pupils her own face and her little pigtails hanging down over her shoulders.

"Little boy, what's your name?"

"Vitya. What's yours?"

"Zhenia. Shall we play 'Tag'?"

"I can't. I'm lame."

And then Zhenia saw that he was wearing an ugly-looking shoe with a very thick sole.

"What a pity!" said Zhenia. "I think you are very nice, and I would very much like to play with you."

"I think you are very nice, too," said the boy; "and I would have liked to run about with you, too, but unfortunately that isn't possible. You can't do anything about it. I've got it for life."

"Oh, fiddlesticks, little boy," cried Zhenia, and she took her wonderful "Seven Magic Petals" out of her pocket—"Look!"

And with that the little girl carefully plucked out the last petal—the azure one—pressed it for a bit to her eyes, then opened her fingers and, trembling with happiness, started to sing in a thin voice:

*"Little Petal, fly away  
To the North, South, East and West,  
Then return, and my behest  
All the world must obey!  
I command that Vitya is well!"*

And that very minute the little boy jumped up from the bench and started to play "Tag" with Zhenia, and he ran so fast that the little girl could not catch him, no matter how hard she tried.

*Translated by HAROLD FELDT.*

# STOCKHOLM TOURNAMENT

By William Winter

THE great tournament, organised at Stockholm, under the auspices of the International Chess Federation, has once again provided convincing proof of the immeasurable superiority of Soviet Chess Masters over the rest of the world. In some respects this tournament is an even more impressive performance than the recent contest for the World Championship, inasmuch as it proves that Soviet chess supremacy is not confined to the brilliancy of two or three exceptionally gifted individuals.

Botvinnik, Smyslov, and Keres did not play at Stockholm, since this was a tournament arranged by the International Federation to decide the competitors for a further tournament next year, the winner of which will play a match against Botvinnik for the championship of the world. Smyslov and Keres, as well as Reshevsky of U.S.A., and Dr. Euwe of Holland, are already qualified to play in the contest, but apart from these the Stockholm twenty were the pick of the world's chess masters selected after many gruelling qualifying contests.

Nine players were entitled to go forward to the next stage, and out of these places, six were occupied by Soviet players. D. Bronstein, the youngest of the competitors, finished first without losing a game, an extraordinary performance in a tournament of this strength, which has only been equalled in the past by Capablanca, and Lasker L. Szabo of Hungary, although he lost two games, came second only a point behind, and then followed the Soviet Grandmasters Boleslavsky, Kotov, and Lilienthal.

For the remaining places Bondarevsky and Flohr (U.S.S.R.) tied with Najdorf (Argentina) and Stahlberg (Sweden). Bronstein, curiously enough, is the only Soviet representative who, prior to the tournament, had not arrived at the rank of Grandmaster. He was awarded it immediately afterwards. Although still in his early twenties, he has been generally recognised as one of the strongest Soviet players since the war, and actually scored a majority in Soviet tournaments against Botvinnik himself. He won the Moscow championship two years ago and finished third in the U.S.S.R. championship the same year, but last year he did not do quite as well, and lost his Moscow title after a tie match with Simagin. This partial setback was probably due to excess of enterprise, striving to win at all events, and this year he has evidently been cultivating the art of restraint.

In Stockholm he played like Capablanca at his best: "Never get a lost game and the

wins will come" was the motto of that great world champion, and that is exactly what Bronstein did. He never made a mistake himself and took remorseless advantage of his opponents. He is a great theorist of an unorthodox type and loves to restore the glories of the obsolete openings on a higher plane. Thus one of his most formidable weapons is the King's Gambit, but he plays this, not with a view to immediate King's side attack (although if his opponent gives him a chance of this he will not be slow to take advantage of it), but in order to gain the advantage of a Queen's side majority in the end game.

This is typical of the Soviet master's approach to the game. An opening has become discredited because it proved insufficient in its original form; therefore it is abandoned. That has been the rule since Steinitz' Modern Chess Instructor, took the romance out of the gambit openings. The Soviet theoreticians accept no such dogma, and they have shown that, in many cases, the fault in the discredited openings lies not in any inherent weakness but in the method in which they were played. Approached from a different strategical angle, many of them are full of possibilities. This revival of ancient openings is one of the most fascinating characteristics of Soviet play.

IF Bronstein was the Capablanca of the tournament, Boleslavsky, who finished third was certainly its Alekhine. The brilliance of his combinations in his best games would have delighted the hearts of the lovers of the old romantic King's side attacks. I am giving a diagram of a superb combination in which two knights remained *en prise* for many moves without possibility of capture, while Boleslavsky coolly brought his reserve forces into play. He also defeated Stahlberg and Book in under 30 moves with direct King's side attacks, a remarkable achievement against two of the steadiest and most experienced masters in the tournament.

Kotov, who was fourth, lost only to Bronstein. As usual he did well in the strongest company. Kotov appears to need the best opposition to bring out the best in him. In mixed tournaments he is apt to outplay himself in his games with the weaker competitors. The other successful Soviet competitors were Lilienthal, Bondarevsky, and Flohr. It was good to see Lilienthal back in a high place. Of late he has been rather out of form, but his play in this tournament was reminiscent of the Lilienthal who triumphed over Capablanca at Hastings before the war, and tied for the Soviet Championship above Botvinnik.

He won a particularly fine game against the Argentinian Najdorf who, many people in Western Europe think, should have taken part in the World Championship. Najdorf followed the line adopted by Reshevsky in his victory over Botvinnik in the championship, but Lilienthal found a flaw in it, and concluded the game with a series of sledgehammer blows. Flohr's success was also very welcome to all true chess lovers. Paradoxically, Flohr plays too well to win important tournaments. He has the purest style of any chess master, and his games are an object lesson to the student, but he seems to ignore the combative side of the game. He will never make a move which he does not consider, subjectively, to be the very best, and consequently he makes a large number of draws from positions in which a little less perfection would produce complications that might easily turn in his favour.

Bondarevsky is another very attractive player who, as opposed to Flohr, delights in complicated positions and is never happier than when he is able to turn an unpromising looking game into a favourable one by some deep-laid strategical plot. He is a typical Cossack of the chess board.

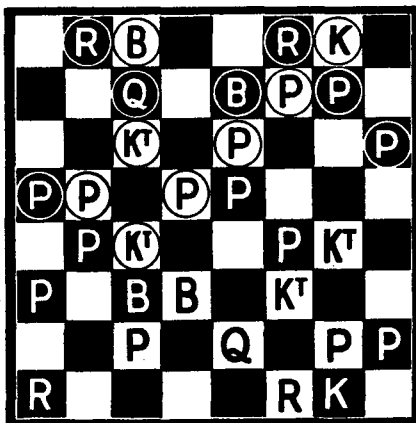
Altogether the tournament is a striking vindication of the correctness of Soviet methods of chess training which has produced a generation of chess masters who are likely to maintain their ascendancy for many years to come. The challenge comes from the new democracies: Szabo, who occupied second place at Stockholm, played magnificently throughout, and Trifunovitch

and Gligoric will certainly have a say in world championships of the future.

*A brilliant finish by Boleslavsky in the 14th round.*

DIAGRAM.

Black : L. PACHMANN.



White : I. BOLESNAVSKY.

Position after Black's 17th move.

Play continued :—

- |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| 18. Kt-B6ch | K-R1        |
| 19. Kt-Kt5  | P x P       |
| 20. P x P   | B x P       |
| 21. B x B   | Kt x B      |
| 22. R - B3  | Kt - B3     |
| 23. R - KR3 | Kt (B3) x P |
| 24. B x Kt  | Kt x B      |
| 25. R x Pch | P x R       |
| 26. Q - Q3  | Resigns.    |

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# INTELLECTUALS IN THE MODERN WORLD

## A Soviet View Discussed

*Because of the interest aroused by the recent Congress of Intellectuals at Wroclaw, which was attended by representatives from the U.S.S.R. and Britain, as well as from many other countries, we are reprinting a speech by Ilya Ehrenburg which was only scantily reported in the British press. It is followed by some answers to questions put to Louis Golding, who was elected one of the British members of the International Committee to carry on the work of the Congress.*

I CANNOT help recalling to-day the International Congress of Writers for the Defence of Culture which met in Paris thirteen years ago. At that Congress, Soviet writers and other progressive writers from all parts of the world warned loudly of the danger that was threatening culture. A few years later events bore out their grim predictions.

The cheap fireworks that followed Munich were paid for with long years of utter darkness, and the blackout which has been lifted in the cities, still obscures the minds of millions of people corrupted by the savagery and ferocity of fascism.

People who fear the future have no affection for the past. They may call themselves traditionalists, but actually they are the waifs of history. That is why men whose religion is avarice, who worship gold and the hierarchy, accepted the yoke of foreign invaders with such ease; and that is why the same men are now, with even greater ease, throwing flowers plucked from their national shrines under the feet of American travelling salesmen.

I affirm that the men and women of the new world are the sole heirs to the culture of the past. For to preserve culture means to carry it onward. Culture is not only museums, it is schools too; not only libraries, but the daring of youth. It is not enough to admire culture or to be proud of it; we must go on creating it hourly.

We do not divide human culture into belts according to latitudes or longitudes. We know that history is movement, and those who want to reduce creative effort to mere repetition lapse into barbarism, become vandals. They first attack the future, burn the books of Marx and Lenin, and then set out to destroy antiquities, museums, libra-

ries. We still remember only too well how culture was destroyed in a country which used to have Goethe's portrait on its postage stamps. The campaign now being carried on by the American obscurantists against the future is directed against the culture of the old European countries, too. Men who lock up their progressive writers will hardly shrink from destroying the Louvre or the Uffizi.

We are witnessing a new orchestration of the old wolfish howls. After all, Hitler spoke of defending "Western culture" long before these bellicose gentlemen.

One look at those in whose company these gentlemen want to save "Western culture" is enough to tell us their true intentions. They want to save "Western culture" with General Franco, with the butchers who have flooded Greece with blood, with Ruhr Nazis, with Italian neo-fascists, with the men who tried to assassinate Togliatti, with the men who throw American writers into prison, with Alabama slave-drivers, with Mississippi lynchers, with the savages of Tennessee who substitute Adam's rib for the theory of evolution, with followers of Pétain who have changed their colours, with Jesuits, with Turkish Janissaries, with adventurers of the type of Glubb-Pasha, with those who are trying to crush Viet-Nam and Indonesia, with any Gestapo man who realised at the proper moment the superiority—not of "Western culture" so much as of Western culture.

These gentlemen say that "Western culture" must be saved from the Soviet Union. Some prefer to speak of the defence of "European culture." The brightest among them have invented an "Atlantic culture."

LET us begin with the latter, since it is the most comprehensive term. Under "Atlantic Culture" its inventors include the culture of America and the



European countries washed by the Atlantic Ocean. (True enough, they are not very strict in this respect—they do not hesitate to include among the countries of "Atlantic culture" Italy, which is washed by the Mediterranean, Western Germany looking upon the Rhine, Greece, and sometimes even Asiatic Turkey.)

But what is it that is supposed to express the cultural community of Paris and Detroit? Is it, perhaps, the fact that the majority of the U.S. population stems from West-European countries? But that would make Australians and South African slave-holders also a part of "Atlantic culture." Is this community expressed in a similar way of life, similar customs, and similar tastes? But everyone who has visited the United States knows that it is a world apart, and that it is much easier for a Frenchman to understand an inhabitant of Prague or Warsaw than a man from Jackson, Mississippi. But we are amazed at the profound difference we find between American books or American films (I am not speaking of the trash that is dumped upon Europe, but of the few good books and good films) and English novels or French films. Naturally, I do not deny that there are ties between French and American culture. But there are many more ties between French and Russian culture.

Now for the other term: "European culture." It is a term which reveals an utter disregard for history and geography; because Moscow has as much right to be regarded as a European capital as Paris, and certainly more than Washington.

I shall dwell at greater length on the most widespread label: "Western culture." Can it be opposed to Russian culture as being something entirely different—say, "Eastern"? Historically, this is absurd, since there has always been a living and organic bond between them. From time immemorial progressive Russia shared the passions, aspirations, and ideas that agitated progressive France, progressive Poland, progressive Italy. I am least of all inclined to belittle the great cultural values which the nations of Western Europe have created. But I should like to ask the apologists of "Western culture" where would the literature of France, England, and the United States be to-day if the classical Russian novel had not appeared on the world stage in the second half of the nineteenth century, if there had been no Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Turgenyev, and Chekhov?

Or take music. Can anyone imagine a history of Western music which would omit the names of Chaikovsky and Moussorgsky?

It is common knowledge that the origin of Russian culture, like that of the culture of other European peoples, is to be traced to ancient Hellas. And Byzantium was certainly not a worse translator than Rome. Andrey Rublev may be included along with Giotto among the most distinguished representatives of the early Renaissance. Many more examples could be cited. I might recall Hertenzen who, in the year when he lived in London, served as a centre around whom

rallied the foremost progressives of the West. I might mention the role Chernyshevsky played, or the wonderful achievements of Russian science. But I think that what I have said is enough to show up the hypocrites or ignoramuses who try to represent Russian culture as alien or even as inimical to the culture of the Western nations.

PERHAPS it is not tsarist Russia, but Soviet Russia that is meant when the line is drawn between "Western culture" and some other? But was not Maxim Gorky the friend of Romain Rolland and the teacher of many writers of Western Europe and America? The young Soviet literature has taught writers of other countries a great deal—first of all, it taught them a new approach to man, to work, to creative effort. Poetry is untranslatable; yet Mayakovsky, with his long strides, traversed the globe, and there is no contemporary poet who has not been inspired by the poetry and life of the great Soviet people. Need I remind you of the journey of "The Battleship Potemkin" through the world? After the recent war, Europe and America were pleasantly surprised by the sudden emergence of an Italian cinema art. But anyone who has seen "Open City" and other films like it knows that there could never have been such films but for the work previously done by the founders of the Soviet cinema art, Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Dovzhenko.

When a Mississippi planter or a Vatican Jesuit speaks of defending "Western culture" from the Soviet Union, it means that they want to keep the minds of their slaves and prisoners shut to any culture—American, Italian, or French.

It is a bizarre picture indeed that we are witnessing—the French flunkies of American masters offering to defend "Western culture" from Joliot-Curie and Prenant, from Aragon and Eluard, from Picasso and Matisse. An ignorant Congressman, Thomas, defends "Western culture" from Fast, Chaplin, or Cauldwell. As soon as Mikolajczyk departed from Poland to take up his abode in the United States, Poland was pronounced to be somewhere in the Far East, and the University of Prague became something thoroughly Asiatic when the Czechoslovak people put an end to the "Western" activities of a few conspirators.

Culture is indeed menaced—not "Western" nor "Eastern," but the culture of mankind. It is menaced by those who speak of saving "Western culture."

I know that there is much that is good in America—excellent scientists, fine writers, and architects. It is not they who are out to subjugate Europe, but the worst representatives of American pseudo-civilisation. We can appreciate America's intellectual values and reject the savagery of Southern planters, the cult of the dollar, and the race fanaticism of a Thomas or Mundt. The Yankees who are invading the countries of Western Europe are not bringing with them Einstein, Steinbeck, Fast or Chaplin, but standardised

detective novels and standardised gangster films—a sort of opium. They want to dope Europe, so as to bind her more easily. It is an attempt upon the national individuality of peoples, their specific features, and multiformity.

Uninvited guardians have now set out to educate Paris, London, Rome. What a frightful picture! The master can afford the luxury of being a nationalist—he considers that he represents a higher race; he alone is master. And his lackeys, who so recently claimed to be "integral nationalists," have now become cosmopolites. The "United States of Europe," of which so much is written nowadays, is not a union of peoples, but an association of butlers, managers, flunkies, and servants—the forced solidarity of menials.

I have said that one cannot love the past unless one loves the future. I may add that one cannot love one's own people unless one loves other peoples. To the nationalist-cosmopolitan narcosis of the imperialists we oppose our patriotism and internationalism. We have a profound respect and affection for the genius of other nations. We know, for example, the originality, romanticism, manly spirit and feminine charm of Polish art—of Mickiewicz, Slowacki, Chopin. No Jules Moch can ever make us forget the genius of the French people, the France of Rimbaud, Courbet, Pasteur, and Zola. The triumph of the ignorant Thomases does not make us forget the industry and giftedness of the American people.

"Peace to the Peoples"—with those words our Republic was born. "Peace to the peoples," said our people as they were bleeding at Stalingrad. And may I here be permitted to address to all of you, those from near and from afar, scholars and artists, those who have crossed seas and police barriers, the same words: "Peace to the peoples!"

FOR thirty years we have been accused of meddling in the affairs of others. Even Hitler, who grabbed a dozen States, accused us of meddling. To-day these charges are being repeated by the new aggressors, the lovers of bases and organisers (at a distance) of various European Cabinets. Yet any desire to impose our ways, our customs, or our culture upon other peoples is farthest from our thoughts. A few years ago I wrote that to accuse us of interfering in the affairs of other countries is as absurd as to accuse the Gulf Stream of interfering with farming in Norway or Denmark. Our existence has changed the world's climate. If one-third of the electorate in France or in Italy voted for the Communists, it is not because we intimidated or bribed them, as others have the habit of doing, but because nowadays even those who can hardly read know what Stalingrad was and who is Stalin.

I may be asked why I refrain from contrasting socialist to bourgeois culture. The reason is that in my view it is out of place to talk of bourgeois culture in this year 1948;

there is no such thing any more—it has given way to bourgeois barbarity. This barbarity may abound in refrigerators and comedies on the subject of adultery, automobiles, and stereoscopic films, laboratories and psycho-analytical novels—but it is barbarity for all that. The bourgeoisie created great spiritual values in its time; it made its contribution to the history of human culture. We appreciate all that was valuable in the past, and we also appreciate the scientists, writers, and artists produced by the third estate. But Balzac lived in the days when capitalism was building. To-day capitalism is destroying; to-day it cannot produce a new Balzac. Everything that is alive and of value in the West to-day is being created by men and women who are close to the masses.

Somebody said that we call first-rate those writers and artists who share our views. This is not true. They become first-rate not because they join us; they join us because they are first-rate. For even the most gifted become sterile when they are at variance with their times. In the supply train of history you may find plagiarists, gourmets, businessmen, but certainly not geniuses.

There are still intellectuals in the world who do not realise, or refuse to realise, who it is that menaces culture. They are trying to find a compromise between cupidity and labour, between those who rebuild wrecked cities and those who want to drop atom bombs on the rebuilt cities.

Can the nation which bore frightful sacrifices in the fight for Europe's freedom want war? On my way here from Moscow I did not see a single town which the fascists had not wrecked. There are few families in our country, who are not missing someone at the table—we fought not in words alone. We fought for peace, and above all else we prize peace, the opportunity to rebuild our towns, bring up our children, grow our orchards. It is because we believe in the triumph of our ideas that we want peace. And who are those that want war? Not the American people, of course. It is the spoilers of America. They want war because they, too, believe that socialism is bound to triumph, and so they want to change the course of history, to drown the future in blood. They shout that they are alarmed by our tanks. Actually they are alarmed by our tractors, our saucepans and shoes, our books, our future.

Two years ago I visited the United States. I saw a rich country without ruins and without mourning. But everyone I met brought up the question of the coming war. The blackmailers wanted to frighten us, but they have frightened their own people. We also often talk about war, but not of one that is to come: we talk about the war that was, we recall the hardest period—the year 1941. We were attacked unawares by an enemy who had more tanks and more aircraft than we. We held out then and we won the war. The consciousness of the spiritual strength of our people—that is our

faith and that is our shield. We pinned our faith in man, and man triumphed.

THESE are times of anxiety. A mist is spreading over the Atlantic. The ruins outside these windows remind us what war means. We have assembled in a city which, freed by the Red Army and the Polish Army, is living its second life animated by the heroic toil of Polish workers. Five years ago here, near the monument to Clausewitz, strutted his inept disciples, and in the factories of Breslau languished slaves, men and women, brought here from every country in Europe. Now scientists, writers, artists, progressive men and women from various countries have met here to discuss what is most lofty and most important: how to defend infant, tree, and verse from the storm which is being manufactured across the ocean.

Many words have been spoken here about peace—admirable words. But it is not enough to extol peace. Peace must be defended, and we can do this together with our peoples. Our American friends, you will soon be back home. You will tell your countrymen that here, in this Polish city of Wroclaw, you met various people, among them “Reds” as they call us in your country. You will tell them that these “Reds” are not out to conquer anything. You will tell your countrymen that the “Reds” may hate the America of Thomas and Mundt, but they hold in high esteem the America of Walt

Whitman, the America of Franklin Roosevelt, the America of the American people.

Our English friends, you will tell your countrymen that we remember the heroism of London in the days of the blitz, that we do not want to see the destruction of England’s magnificent culture which is menaced by the transatlantic upstarts.

Friends from France, friends from Italy, friends from the sixteen enchained countries, you will tell your peoples that we Soviet writers and scientists revere the sacred stones of Europe, that what we want is to uphold the culture, peace, and independence of your countries.

Speak, write, fight—there is no time to be lost. May this our meeting amidst ruins and scaffoldings herald the advent of a new era. Without salt, bread does not taste like bread. You are the salt, the conscience, the intellect of the peoples. You must swear that henceforward wherever a calumniator or warmonger raises his voice, someone of you will interrupt it with words of truth and hope.

Ten years ago, when the fascists completed their work of enslaving Spain, a young Spanish Republican told me: “We will win in the end, because to-morrow is on our side.” Spain is still in chains, and the spurious “democrats” of the West are jealously making sure that the chains are strong. But that Spanish Republican soldier was right nevertheless. We will win, we men of peace and labour; we will win because on our side is To-morrow!

## LOUIS GOLDING COMMENTS

*Ilya Ehrenburg’s speech at the Wroclaw Conference of Intellectuals was a challenge. The challenge was taken up by Louis Golding in an interview with the Anglo-Soviet Journal when he replied to questions on the speech. We hope to have comments from Ehrenburg on Golding’s answers.*

THE questions which were addressed to Louis Golding, and his answers, are given below:—

QUESTION.—Do you agree with Ehrenburg’s insistence on the unity of all European culture?

ANSWER.—I believe in the unity, not merely of all European but of all culture, in the sense that culture is an essential faculty and an acquisition of all fine men in the same way that love and magnanimity are their faculty and acquisition. If Ehrenburg, by his insistence on the unity of all European culture, is implying a disunity between, say, European and American culture, or African and Asian culture I disagree with him.

In other words, I repeat, to me culture is all one, being a human incandescence, and only its forms differ according to time and place, although even here, some cultures

widely remote in time and place, sometimes more strongly resemble each other than other cultures contemporary and contiguous.

QUESTION.—Do you think there is an Eastern and Western emphasis noticeable in the general unity?

ANSWER.—Yes, there is such an emphasis often noticeable, but as I said just now, quite often the individual artists and intellectuals in widely-separated cultures may feel and think along such similar lines that the emphasis becomes blurred.

QUESTION.—Do you attribute this to the different social structures?

ANSWER.—Culture is obviously to some degree, small or great, conditioned by the complex of hereditary and environmental forces, although it is an unimportant element, in my view, in the finest artist who seems often incapable of relationship with his specific social structure; I mean, the element of essential individual inspiration, sometimes

called genius, is often timeless and spaceless.

QUESTION.—Do you agree with Ehrenburg's belief that intellectuals can only produce worth-while creative work if they actively participate in the political and social life of their country?

ANSWER.—I think it is likelier that the best creative work will be produced by artists so abundant in energy that they will participate in the political and social life of their country. I think it is false to say that, unless they do so participate, they must necessarily be inferior artists.

I see that your question concerns itself with intellectuals rather than with artists, and an intellectual can hardly be a valuable intellectual (excepting in the field of pure science), unless he attempts some synthesis of the political and social life of his country with his own particular science. On the other hand, Shakespeare was Shakespeare without much participation in the political and social scene as far as we are aware; Balzac was Balzac although his attempts at participation in the political scene were abortive and slightly silly. The worst of Wagner was that element which participated in the political life in the Germany of his time.

QUESTION.—Would you agree that in the present situation of war threats, intellectuals and artists must be vocal in anti-war movements, using their art as a vehicle?

ANSWER.—I certainly think that intellectuals and artists of the best kind are most likely at this time to be vocal in the anti-war movement, using their art as a vehicle, but I would not condemn the artist or intellectual who finds his art not functioning in the field of anti-militarist propaganda. During the late war against Hitler the useful and fortunate thing for the artist and intellectual was to be a pro-war propagandist. There, too, I did not condemn him if strictly as an artist he did not feel impelled to enter

actively into the field of propaganda. If he were forced either by official pressure from above or by social pressure from around him to enter into the arena of propaganda, the propaganda would probably have been inferior. Let the enthusiasts for propaganda among the artists and intellectuals be entrusted with the job of propaganda, and the job will be worth doing.

QUESTION.—What in your opinion are the factors which make for a common culture?

ANSWER.—I find that an exceedingly difficult question to answer. For in looking back in what I know of the history of the arts and cultures, I find artists quite frequently uncannily like each other, although the factors to the influence of which they have been subjected have been widely dis-related in time and space.

QUESTION.—Would you agree with Ehrenburg that in many ways a cultured Frenchman from Paris would feel himself much more at home in Prague or Warsaw than in Chicago or Kansas City?

ANSWER.—I think quite likely a cultured Frenchman would feel more at home in the Prague of to-day than in Chicago or Kansas City, and would have felt himself much more at home in pre-war Warsaw than in Chicago or Kansas City. But he is quite likely to feel in contemporary Warsaw a dynamic sense of upbuilding which makes him feel that Chicago and Kansas City are old-fashioned villages out in the steppes.

Rather more seriously, I don't think the comparison fairly expressed. The cultured Frenchman will almost certainly feel more at home in New Orleans than in Prague, for instance. I think the whole question rather fruitless; so much depends on the cultured Frenchman, so much on the personal setting in which he would find himself, whether in Prague or Warsaw, Chicago or Kansas City, Rheims or Buenos Aires.

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# S.C.R. ACTIVITIES

## Reports from all Sections

**T**HE Society has, as usual, had a full calendar of autumn events of a very varied character, as will be seen from the following account of the activities of its different departments and sections:—

**ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING GROUP.**—The Group is collecting questions from leading architects on aspects of Soviet architecture and building, with a view to publishing them on the same lines as "Soviet Writers' Reply," the successful publication of the S.C.R. Writers' Group. The new editor of the Architecture Group's Bulletin, Mr. Cleeve Barr, has issued Bulletin No. 18, containing a review of the main articles in the most recently received number of the Soviet journal "Arkhitektura i Stroitelstvo" (Architecture and Construction). Spare copies are available to non-members of the Group at 6d.

**CHESS SECTION.**—Work has proceeded on the publication of the book of the Anglo-Soviet Match of September, 1947, and bulletins are in preparation on the U.S.S.R. Championship of November-December, 1948. The Council has viewed a Soviet film on the World Championship, and hopes to give a public performance for members and friends early in the New Year.

**EDUCATION SECTION.**—Two performances of Soviet films on education have been arranged for members and friends at 18, Kensington Palace Gardens, by kind permission of the Soviet Embassy. On September 28, "The Village Teacher" was shown, and on November 18 "The First Year of School." Two information sheets on recent developments in Soviet education have been issued to members under the editorship of Miss Deana Levin.

**EXHIBITION DEPARTMENT.**—The Exhibition of Architecture of the U.S.S.R. has been shown in the Municipal Art Gallery, Hanley and at the College of Technology, Belfast (under the auspices of C.E.M.A. of Northern Ireland). The smaller exhibition on Moscow was seen at the Royal Technical College, Glasgow, in October, and at the College of Art and Crafts, Nottingham, in November. Exhibits from the collection of Soviet Photography were seen at the City Art Gallery, Nottingham, and the London Salon of Photography, and puppets from the Soviet Theatre Exhibition were lent to the Educational Puppetry Association in London, and the Educational Puppetry Institute in Manchester. The very fine exhibi-

tion of "Fifty Years of the Moscow Art Theatre," sent to the Theatre Section by VOKS, was mounted by the Department in the S.C.R. House during October and November.

The department's major activity during the autumn has been the Exhibition of Coloured Reproductions of Russian 18th and 19th Century Painting. This was opened by H.E. the Soviet Ambassador (M. Georgi Zaroubin) on November 11, at St. Martin's School of Art, London, and remained open till November 27. Much interest was aroused by the historical treatment of the subject, both in the layout of the exhibition and in the booklet on Russian Painting prepared by Mr. Jack Chen, and the assistance which this gave to the understanding of contemporary Soviet painting.

A number of lectures were organised at the exhibition. On November 12 Mr. Chen spoke on "The Forerunners of Soviet Painting"; Miss Millicent Rose lectured on November 23 on "Russian Painting"; and on November 26 Mr. Cyril Bunt gave a talk on "Russian Realism." A Brains Trust on Russian and Soviet Art was held on November 20, with Mr. Bunt, Mr. Chen, and Dr. Francis Klingender to answer questions, and Dr. Henry M. Roland as question-master.

**FILM SECTION.**—A reception and showing of the colour film "A Tale of Siberia" was, by the courtesy of the Soviet Ambassador, arranged on October 5 at 18, Kensington Palace Gardens, and attended by many actors, technicians, and others professionally engaged in cinema work. The Film Section of VOKS has been most generous in sending material, including copies of the films "The Young Guard" and "Treasure Island," a large number of stills covering the most popular Soviet films of the past year, and descriptive matter. The VOKS Film Section, in its turn, has requested stills, information about the cinema here, and copies of current British films.

**LEGAL SECTION.**—The Annual General Meeting of the Anglo-Soviet Law Association was held on November 8. Bulletins No. 3 and 4 have now been issued, dealing respectively with the plea of "Guilty" in Soviet courts, and with the use of the building lease in the U.S.S.R. Spare copies are available to non-members of the Association at 6d.

**LIBRARY.**—The normal stream of inquiries and requests continues. One afternoon's post carries such a diversity as an inquiry for the works of Michurin, a pub-

lisher's request for the line of the U.S.S.R.-Finland boundary to be included in a geography text-book, a query about the whereabouts of gramophone records of the voices of Lenin and Stalin, and a request from the B.B.C. for a chart of English equivalents of the Russian alphabet. In addition, the library has spent much time in collating and preparing translations of the main documents in the current aesthetic controversies in the U.S.S.R. Most of the main documents are now available in duplicated form, and a list of them will be sent on request.

It is felt that this is one of the most valuable services ever performed by the Library, since so much confusion has arisen through the inadequate reports appearing in the Press, and through the ignoring of the fact that the current discussions must be viewed against their historical background. The preparation of these translations has been particularly useful as a basis for the general discussion on "Problems of Soviet Aesthetics," arranged by the Society for December 11.

**MUSIC COMMITTEE.**—Two successful concerts have been held in the S.C.R. Music Room during the autumn. On October 18, Shostakovich's 'Cello Sonata was played by William Pleeth and Margaret Good, and Martin Lawrence sang songs from Russian and Soviet opera. On November 16, Joshua Glazier (violin) and James Gibb (piano) played works by Prokofiev, Khachaturian, Shostakovich and Asafiev, and were joined by Phil Cardew (clarinet) for the Khachaturian Trio. On November 25, at the request of the S.C.R., the London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Nikolai Malko, gave a programme of Russian works at the Albert Hall.

**SCIENCE SECTION.**—The Section has been kept extremely busy in answering inquiries arising from the current Soviet discussions on biology (which are dealt with in an article elsewhere in this issue). Assistance was given to the publishers of the booklet containing in translation the main statement by Academician Lysenko at the session of the Lenin Academy of Agricultural Science, and it was on the initiative of the S.C.R. Science Section that a full translation has been begun of the whole discussion at the session. It is hoped that this translation will appear in the middle of 1949.

The Medical Committee is proceeding with the preparation of an English index to Soviet medical journals, which will for the first time provide a conspectus of current Soviet work indexed under author and subject. A number of requests for English medical books have been received from the U.S.S.R., and the Committee has been asked to prepare lists of recommended books in all the fields of medicine.

**THEATRE SECTION.**—In honour of the 50th anniversary of the Moscow Art Theatre, the Section arranged a reading of Alexei Tolstoy's "Tsar Feodor," at the Whitehall

Theatre on October 24. A prologue was spoken by Dame Edith Evans (president of the Section), and among those who took part were Denis Arundell, Dorothy Black, George Hayes, Frank Pettingell, and Franklin Dyall, who also produced the reading. Commemorative folders on the anniversary were sent by VOKS for presentation to those who took leading parts. A cable of greetings on the anniversary was sent by the Section to the Moscow Art Theatre over the signatures of Dame Edith Evans, Sir Kenneth Barnes (Principal of R.A.D.A.), Peter Brook (Director of Productions, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden), John Burrell (Director, Old Vic Company), Michael MacOwan (Producer, London Mask Theatre), Llewellyn Rees (Drama Director, Arts Council), Michel St. Denis, George Devine, and Glen Byam Shaw (Directors of the Old Vic Theatre Centre), Gordon Sandison (Secretary of Equity), Ninette de Valois (Director of Ballet, Covent Garden), Robert Donat, John Gielgud, and the members of the Section's Committee.

A superb exhibition, showing 50 years of the Moscow Art Theatre's work, was sent for the anniversary by VOKS. It was opened by Dame Edith Evans on October 28, in the Society's house, and remained open to the public until November 13.

**WRITERS' GROUP.**—A series of lectures has been arranged on the influence of the 19th century Russian novelists on English writing. The first lecture was held on October 26, when Arthur Calder-Marshall spoke on Dostoevsky, with Compton Mackenzie in the chair, and a translator's comments by Dr. Edith Bone. On November 23, Montagu Slater spoke on Turgenev, with Richard Hare speaking from the translator's viewpoint, and Pamela Hansford Johnson in the chair. The Group's Annual General Meeting was arranged for December 14.

**MEMBERS' EVENINGS.**—As an autumn continuation of the Garden Evenings which proved so popular in the summer, Members' Evenings were held on September 22, with a puppet performance by A. R. Philpot; on October 20, with Walter Hudd reading Russian poetry; and on November 16, in conjunction with the Music Committee's concert. An informal dance for members and friends was held on October 9, and a New Year's Eve party was planned for December 31.

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.**—The Society's Annual General Meeting was held on November 29, when the Annual Report and Accounts for 1947-48 were adopted. Printed copies will shortly be circulated to all members. Two new members were elected to the Executive Committee—Mr. D. T. Richnell and Mr. Gordon Sandison replacing Miss Louise Morgan and Dr. G. M. Vevers, whose retirement from the committee after so many years of service was received with great regret.

# A THEATRE OF BRAVE SIMPLICITY

By Vladimir I. Nemirovich-Danchenko

*This article, by the late Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko, one of the creators of the Moscow Art Theatre, was written for the fortieth anniversary of the theatre. To-day, when the M.A.T. is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary, it is still an outstanding summing up of the development of this great world theatre and its transition from pre-revolutionary to Soviet Russia.*

I HAVE NEVER attempted to systematise the results of the Art Theatre's forty years of work; I haven't had the time. But approximately I would divide it into three periods.

The first was taken up with the fight against the old theatre. This, indeed, was what brought the Art Theatre into being, the fight against the clichés that went by the pompous name of "traditions." Living speech instead of sonorous declamation; living characters instead of the conventional exploit of the hero and comedian and ingénue; a living, vital, and convincing atmosphere. Such were the principal features of the new art with which the theatre made its debut.

Chekhov was of the greatest help to us in this. True, the beginnings of the new were already felt before Chekhov in *Tsar Fyodor*; but it was Chekhov who established it in our theatre. Also of tremendous significance was the importance attached to the role of the producer. A new thing in the Russian theatre.

Soon the weak points of our trend began to make themselves felt—arising, evidently, from the character of the gifts and predominant inclinations of those who were putting this trend through—that is, the producers and actors. My own failing, perhaps, was that I was more interested in the literary nature of the characters than in their lifelike, scenic expression. This did possibly retard the theatre's growth in some measure, and it provoked Constantine Stanislavsky's protest.

When our strong sides merged, the result was the production of wonderful plays. The plays we put on together constituted the strongest period in the Art Theatre's history. When we separated, there were

probably mistakes on both his part and mine.

However that may be, in the theatre's first years our art was extraordinarily rich in hope. The old theatre presented so many reasons for struggle, it was guilty of so many obvious sins and mistakes, its theatrical ideas were covered with so much stagnant mould and mildew, that it was easy to fight it. This fight completely absorbed the Art Theatre.

In the end, Chekhov's art took the upper hand. His theatrical art cast such a magic spell over us that it would be difficult to name a single rehearsal of any play—whether modern or classical Russian, Shakespeare, or Sophocles—in which we did not draw on the store of creative experience we had accumulated in our work on Chekhov's plays.

And yet, before ten years had passed, we again began to be conscious of certain mistakes, because we remained people with fresh minds, exacting in our demands on ourselves, and maintaining close contact with the new literature and life. Thus the second period in the life of the Art Theatre began.

QUITE soon, within a few years in fact, Stanislavsky realised that any break with the content of the play, any projection of himself into the literary texture of a play, was impermissible. At the same time, he began to think a great deal about what simplicity in acting meant, about the inner technique of acting, the importance of mastering the actor's craft, and not yielding to his whimsical fancy as a producer. Working in this direction, Constantine Stanislavsky began to put his finger on what became the basic line of his art and his "system," as it is called. Then he also began to seek the new in outer form. He soon became surfeited with what he had been doing hitherto. From then on, the studios began to appear, one after another.

For my part, I realised that fine literary interpretation of a play will not alone lead

to full-blooded accord between the producer and actor, and began to give more thought to my own qualities as a producer.

Organisationally we worked separately, but constantly helped each other. Our objective was the same: artistic realism, profound interpretation of the author's ideas and stubborn opposition to conventionalism on the stage and bohemianism in life.

However, at the end of the second decade, just before the revolution, we were up against an impasse, a very real impasse, both with regard to repertoire and our art as such.

This is what always happens when people who have achieved the outstanding make the preservation of their success and only that, their chief concern. Our admirers among the public championed our achievements and restrained us from new quests, and—here is the main thing—we ourselves began to lose our spirit of daring, to become "academic" in our Chekhov school. In our choice of plays we were more or less straddling the fence, wading in the mediocre and grey.

Sentimentality and moralising crept on to the stage, into the acting. These qualities I to-day regard as the worst enemies of real, courageous truth. Whence they had come is a question I cannot dwell on now, but the situation within the theatre had become such that, well, it was almost a matter of not producing anything at all!

It took the October Socialist Revolution to turn the searchlight on our life, our art. In its rays, the big stood out clearly from the small, the important from the insignificant, genuine honesty from its simulation. The Revolution called for daring, for brave flights of the imagination, it strengthened our belief in what had formerly seemed utterly unachievable.

I am speaking of something which later came to be simply called socialism in art, and I am speaking of it as we felt it then.

**E**VEN before the October Revolution, the Art Theatre was revolutionary, not only in art but also in life. All our searchings, real and spiritual, were drawn to the struggle for the beautiful and the free in life. But the exigencies of life, the necessity of maintaining ties with the strata against whom the Revolution was directed, these had a most negative effect on our political being.

The truth must out; when the Revolution came, we were frightened. It did not turn out as Schiller had painted it. And at first we were less "revolutionary" than those men of the arts (some sincere, some adventurers) who were leading the theatres down the road of "Leftism." Those who regarded themselves as "extreme lefts" began to deride us as die-hards and called the Art Theatre a "foul corpse." We remained honest and did not react to this. We were afraid art would be turned into a mere amusement; were afraid of selling our birthright for coquetry with flashy tabs;

we wanted to preserve what we had acquired, in the conviction that it would be needed again just as it was.

Gradually finding our bearings, closely studying the phenomena which the Revolution had introduced into our lives, into the theatre, and into art, we realised that they promised the solution of the muddle which had led us to this impasse. It was with the help of the new ideas the Revolution brought that we found our way out of the impasse. All that was adventurist had fallen away by this time, had been discarded, and the road had become clear. There began the movement towards the masses for which we had always yearned.

The third period—a new period in our art, and the richest in results began. Our veteran actors had already become eminent masters. Nor did they lag behind the strong current of youth within the theatre, behind their pupils. The theatre slowly but surely began to fit into the life of the Revolution, the life that was springing up around us. Our entire collective began to sense keenly the tremendous difference between those interests which had gripped us in our pre-revolutionary existence, and the themes dictated to us by the construction of the new life.

Thus, in this merger of the life of the theatre with the vast torrent of new ideas, with the reshuffling of the artistic experience we had accumulated, the art we now have began to be forged.

And it is now possible to speak of the results of this process. We know where we are going. We have models of the new art already, as for instance, *Enemies*. Here, throughout practically the whole of the play, the new theatre can already be sensed. It is not something accidental, not a blind search—no, we already know *how* to go about accomplishing it, we know *what* it is. We know the ideological content of our art exactly, we see its strength and future.

**W**ITH what are we coming to our fortieth anniversary? What are we—a Chekhov theatre? No, not a Chekhov theatre. This, by the way amazed and annoyed most of the emigrées in Paris, who expected to see the theatre of Chekhov just as they had left it when they ran away from the Soviet Union: the same familiar tone, the same pauses, the same famous Chekhov plays with their wonderful atmosphere. They did not see this and were annoyed. In an article with the characteristic title of "In Memory of the Art Theatre," we read: "But it is not the Chekhov Theatre that has come here, it is a Gorky Theatre."

Yes, this is now a Gorky theatre! But a Gorky theatre does not exclude the Chekhov theatre; rather does it take the latter unto itself, so to speak.

We shall try to preserve all the charm of Chekhov's plays, but in reviving them, shall present a Chekhov cleansed of the clichés that have grown up in our own art, and of which we have become aware under pressure of the ideas which have taken hold of us as



members of the new, Soviet intelligentsia.

To work on Chekhov in the light of our new actors' individualities is one of our great and immediate tasks. Never before have I been so convinced as now that in the new phase of art upon which our theatre has embarked, Chekhov will shine with added strength and in a new light, freed of the sentimentality which is often a substitute for deep lyricism.

Well then, what is the most important thing in our "to-day"? I shall speak of the main thing only.

First of all, brave simplicity. Not simplicity for simplicity's sake, not over-simplification, but a simplicity that is at once brave and wise, as someone once said. It is when a person feels simply, sees and speaks simply, never wasting his energies on petty details, or succumbing to sentimentality, or coldly moralising.

We have given this a great deal of thought and gone to much trouble, struggled for it these 40 years, because the Art Theatre began the struggle against false theatricality. When we began to fight this, we often, as the saying goes, threw out the baby together with the bath water: in ridding our theatre of theatricality, we also impoverished its scenic possibilities. When the play, as in Chekhov, was sustained by the poetic spell of the author, the general composition, a happy marriage of the actors' individualities with the characters they portrayed and good production, there was no need to worry about this. But as soon as we passed on to another author, there we were, straddling two chairs. Often we avoided theatricality in a play, but as a

result the play lost much of its resonance, or failed to express the author's intentions.

The actor remains first in the play. In olden days, he was also first, but he was alone. To-day he has the help of his partner, of the artist and of the producer, to the end that his individuality may harmonise with the line of action of the whole play.

The same applies to outer form. Constantine Stanislavsky began to seek new forms very early, soon after the Art Theatre made its first steps. We floundered, we experimented, doing *The Drama of Life* unrealistically, *The Life of Man* in silhouettes, *The Brothers Karamazov* against a single back scene, and *Rosmersholm* against a flat back drop. These were all experiments made for the sake of escaping from naturalism.

Now we can put it this way, that the actor's interpretation of the role, the mise-en-scène and the entire composition, must be as integrated as possible in each play (this is the only way to act). We travelled along a route that began with much striving, we made many mistakes and struggled with alien clichés, and then with our own. Then came the October Revolution which made us reconsider everything not only from the standpoint of art but also from that of the great ideas of mankind, clearing away the refuse and leaving only the most genuine that constitutes the kernel of the Russian dramatic theatre, that is, genuine artistic realism. Forged and hammered by such experience this art of ours has brought us out to where we are to-day. This theatre can embrace Gorky, and Tolstoi, and Chekhov, and Shakespeare, and Sophocles, and Aristophanes.

..... This is something more than part of an exchange of information between two sets of writers  
..... it can be read with profit by people who have no concern with authorship ..... a valuable little bridge between the Soviet people and ourselves.

J. B. PRIESTLEY.

## SOVIET WRITERS' REPLY

*Foreword by* - - - - J. B. PRIESTLEY

*Preface by* - - - - - K. SIMONOV

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# 50 Years of the M.A.T.

*On October 28, Dame Edith Evans, President of the Theatre Section, opened at the S.C.R. an exhibition which had just arrived from Moscow entitled "Fifty Years of the Moscow Art Theatre." The following is a review of the exhibition by*

**Alex McCrindle**

ONLY a very small number of theatre workers in Britain and America have been privileged to see the work of the Moscow Art Theatre, yet no other group has exerted such an influence over three generations of players, designers, and producers. Every student of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art learns something of the methods taught by its founders, Stanislavsky and Nemirovitch-Danchenko, and many of our leading players rose to the top of their profession using these men as their guides.

To the unprivileged this exhibition may seem tantalising, yet the organisers have done a magnificent job. To create a unified impression of the work of the theatre over a period of 50 years was no easy task. The company must have produced hundreds of plays in that time, but the planners must needs tell us the story with the aid of a few hundred photographs and fewer notes. Let me say at once that they have succeeded. The photographs are superb, and are annotated in such a way that you feel you know the answer to one of the most baffling questions in theatrical history—how did the Moscow Art survive when the Theatre of Antoine in Paris and the Independent Theatre in England came to nought?

From the first production of Alexei Tolstoy's "Tsar Feodor" in 1898 to the latest one displayed—Konstantin Simonov's "The Russian Question" in 1947—they have stuck to their aim as expressed by Konstantin Stanislavsky "to found the first popular, rational, moral theatre." What that involves is again expressed by the founder: "Contemporary life and ideas—that's what we've been called upon to present on the stage. Art should reveal the ideals created by the people themselves. . . . These ideals live: the artist comes along and sees them; he vests them with artistic form and to the people who created them, he offers these ideals in such form that they are better assimilated, better understood." That statement was made 30 years after the founding, and the exhibition is largely the story of how such a clear statement came to be made.

The first section deals largely with the various productions of Chekov—"The Seagull," "Uncle Vanya," "The Three Sisters,"

and "The Cherry Orchard," but just to remind us that Chekov was not the gentle dreamer so beloved by many of our own intellectuals, there is a quotation from Irana's speech from the first act of "The Three Sisters": "Man must toil, must work. Work by the sweat of his brow, no matter who he is; and in that alone is the meaning and the aim of his life, his happiness, his sheer joy."

Through the work put in on these plays the Theatre evolved its artistic methods, which were to command the admiration of the civilised world. Plays by Dostoevsky, Turgenev, Gogol, Shakespeare, Moliere, were constantly being done, but the next important influence was undoubtedly Gorky's. "The Philistines" and "The Lower Depths" provided the Theatre with the means to achieve a "Socio-political line," and what magnificent productions they must have been is evident from these pictures.

THE October Revolution, in the words of Nemirovich-Danchenko, "radically changed our conditions of work. It gave us economic independence, freed us from bourgeois shareholders. It showed us the way to the real people." The classics continued to be performed and are represented here by Beaumarchais' "The Marriage of Figaro," Leo Tolstoy's "Resurrection," and others, but new men were found to interpret the spirit of the times: men like Treniev ("Pugachev'schina"), Ostrovsky ("The Passionate Heart"), and Ivanov ("Armoured Train").

The late war presented the Theatre with another challenge. Groups were sent to the front to perform under difficult conditions: behind the lines the Theatre worked hard to produce plays for the times. Simonov's "The Russian People," Korneichuk's "The Front," and Chirskov's "The Conquerors" are only a few of the plays which helped so much to maintain the moral of the people fighting for their freedom.

And so we come to the last of the plays depicted in the exhibition—Simonov's "The Russian Question." If we are to believe the enemies of the Soviet Union, that country wants war. Simonov passionately declares this is not so—that it is an invention of those who stand to gain most from war. Those who visit this exhibition will agree with him; for if one thing stands out in this exhibition it is the will of the Soviet people to create a "rational, moral" world, and in such a world war has no place.

# The Training of Actors in the U.S.S.R.

*Summarized from an article by V. Z. Radomyslensky, Director of the Moscow Art Theatre Studio*

THE State Institute of Dramatic Art founded in 1931 is one of the biggest institutions of dramatic education in the U.S.S.R. It is staffed by the most distinguished teachers in Moscow and conducts experimental work and research in the history and theory of dramatic art. Under it are various national studios which provide theatre training for the non-Russian republics.

There are some thousand professional, permanent theatres in the Soviet Union not counting the tens of thousands of amateur theatres. These theatres need a veritable army of actors, stage directors, and students of the theatre. As life progresses, as human experience becomes richer, and human consciousness deeper and broader, realism in art requires the actor to study reality more and more deeply. Artistic intuition alone is absolutely insufficient for this study. It requires an all-round education.

K. S. Stanislavsky, to whom we are indebted for generalising and extracting the essence from the best experience in acting, was the first to make this demand of theatrical workers. Before studying acting itself, the novice should look to his general education. "If you remain an ignoramus," Stanislavsky sternly admonished one young actor: "I shall consider you an enemy of the stage and direct all my arrows against you."

The Soviet Government has established a huge network of establishments for theatrical education, ranging from dramatic institutes to theatrical schools where, besides acquiring a special education in their chosen field, future actors also acquire an all-round general education.

The decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) of April 23, 1932, concerning the reorganisation of literary and art organisations facilitated the final unification of theatrical workers around the realistic ideas of Stanislavsky and Vakhtangov. I. M. Leonidov, a pupil and follower of Stanislavsky, became the head of the State Institute of Dramatic Art.

He attached tremendous importance to the cultivation of the actor's sense of the new, his sense of the spirit of the times and his ties with the Soviet people. "Not only must we teach professional skill," Leonidov

wrote in 1941, "not only must we teach the theory and practice of the theatre, not only must we inspire respect for art. We must also bring up our pupils, bring them up in the widest sense of the term, and what is most important, in the Soviet spirit. If the actor, stage director, and student of the theatre does not keep his ears open to the voice of the times, does not maintain close relations with his country, does not look upon even the classics from the point of view of the times, everything he does will seem imperfect, will be remote, alien, and incomprehensible."

That part of Stanislavsky's teaching which relates to the actor's acquisition of inner and outer technique is expounded in his book "The Actor's Work on Himself." This book contains the scientific basis of the methods which put the actor's psycho-physical apparatus into motion. The main purpose of these methods is to teach the actor consciously to regulate his creative apparatus, to find the way consciously towards creative feeling. It is this which made Stanislavsky's system revolutionary.

Leonidov followed a distinct and clear principle in cultivating creative feeling. "The most important thing, the beginning of all beginnings, is thought. Thought engenders feeling, feeling results in action which in its turn results in thought."

LEONIDOV'S principles are being followed in the Institute by M. M. Tarkhanov, who succeeded Leonidov as the Head of the Institute after the former's death. Subjects in the curriculum are characteristic of the Soviet conception of an actor. The future Soviet actor must be equal to the advanced ideas which are the motive force of Soviet society, must be well-educated. The Institute's students therefore study, as required subjects, the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism, the history of philosophy, aesthetics, the history of art, the theory of dramatic art, the history and theory of acting. The required standards in general educational subjects are the same as those made in all other higher institutes in the U.S.S.R.

The course in acting is conducted on the basis of Stanislavsky's system, and its aim is to teach future actors the inner technique of interpreting character parts, of revealing the content of each part. The course begins with the simplest exercises aiming at the development of the psychological and physical faculties necessary to the actor.

Only after the student has developed these qualities in sufficient measure and has gained command of all the elements of scenic feeling, does he proceed to work on psychological plot studies, beginning with the very simplest. With the student's acquisition of skill these studies are made more and more complicated until the novice is set tasks in character portrayal.

The next step is work on a real rôle. The curriculum is so arranged that by that time the student has already acquired sufficient ground for perceiving and feeling the idea-content of a play. This is an essential prerequisite for his beginning to work on the dramatic portrayal of character. The study of rôles is the last final stage in an actor's education, for which he prepared himself not only in the special classes in acting, but also in the process of fulfilling the whole educational plan. Besides the general subjects and the course in acting, this plan includes such subjects as plastics, rhythemics, singing, and music—all subjects promoting external histrionic technique.

The Institute's graduates are thoroughly trained for independent creative work. Scattering, after graduation, to the most remote parts of the Soviet Union, they apply their knowledge and talent there. In this respect the Institute's national studies which train creative personnel for the national theatres, are particularly important. The Soviet Government has always paid special attention to theatrical training in the Soviet republics.\* As early as 1918-1919 the theatre department of the Commissariat of Public Education organised a theatre committee for the express purpose of developing dramatic art among the peoples who until then had either no theatre of their own, or only a very primitive form of theatre.

**M**ASTERS of the Russian theatre came to the aid of the non-Russian republics of the Soviet Union in the developing of dramatic art, in the creation of national repertoires and national studios. Young people from Yakutia, Osetia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and other republics acquire theatrical education in the Institute. The eagerness these young people showed for culture, the heroic efforts they made to achieve their goal (this is especially true of the girls among them, who broke the ancient traditions confining Oriental women to the home) inspired the Institute's teachers to surmount all the obstacles in their way.

Professor O. I. Pyzhova recounts her early efforts to teach a group of Kara-Kalpakian students. She spent the first few lessons trying to establish contact with them with-

out much success. The plots of all the studies she suggested did not win their interest, touched no springs in them. After a few days, when the atmosphere of the classroom had become intolerably tense, one of the students suddenly burst out with the complaint: "Teacher, you have your phantasies, and I have my own." "He is right," a girl said, rising from her place. "You have your own phantasy, he his own. Let him act his phantasy." This suggestion immediately electrified the students. Each one eagerly offered to act out his own study in which he could make use of the impressions he had accumulated during his life.

The studies thus elaborated reflected the customs and modes of the Kara-Kalpakian people, their ways of life, their manner of conducting themselves. Their movements had special rhythm and plastic quality, and their studies contained the impressions of their childhood, spent in their native parts. They tried to convey the sensations aroused by the landscape of Kara-Kalpakia, with its bright sunlight, trees, birds, and irrigation canals. They reproduced scenes of struggle with wild beasts with much plastic grace.

In the training of actors for the National Theatres of the Soviet Republics the Institute has acquired rich experience; and its work is now firmly based on national art traditions.

The Institute's national studios generally train whole theatrical companies, which return to their homeland with their own qualified stage directors and actors, and a repertoire already prepared. Many former students of the Institute's studios have now become well-known throughout the U.S.S.R. as actors and stage directors.

Besides training actors, stage directors, and theatrical historians, the State Institute of Dramatic Art also conducts research work in the history and theory of dramatic art and dramatic pedagogy. In drawing up its curriculum and educational plans, the department of theatrical research pays special attention to the elaboration of the problems of the new Soviet theatres. Problems of socialist aesthetics and the ethics of the Soviet actor are discussed at faculty meetings and in student auditoriums. The Soviet Union, where theatrical research has become a science, is the first country to train dramatic critics and theatrical research workers.

All the departments of the Institute conduct research work, and their programmes cover all aspects of the theatre. The stage-directing department studies the experience of the world theatre in this field, elaborates stage-directing problems in the Soviet theatre, and methods of training stage directors. The Institute prepares text-books for dramatic institutes and schools, with the help of the professors and post-graduate students of the Institute.

Its experience helps the dramatic institutes in other Soviet cities, of which there are at present fourteen. Each institute is staffed by prominent actors of the Soviet theatre.

\*[In this connection it is interesting to note that a new theatre has just been opened in Tallin, Esthonia. The nucleus of the new company is composed of this year's graduates from the State Institute of Dramatic Art, Moscow.—*Editor.*]



**T**HE studio schools organised by the theatres themselves represent a special type of dramatic school. There are 108 of such schools at present in the U.S.S.R. The Nemirovich-Danchenko studio under the Moscow Art Theatre, the Shchepkin School under the Maly Theatre, and the Shchukin School under the Vakhtangov Theatre, for instance, differ from the State Institute of Dramatic Art chiefly in that they aim to train future actors for their own theatres.

An essential factor in the training given in these studios is that the students take part in the theatre's production work. The value of this method is confirmed by the experience of the Moscow Art Theatre, which has used it to train a fine reinforcement for its company. The leading actors of what is known as the Art Theatre's "second generation" were taught in the Art Theatre's Second Studio.

The principal art subjects in these studio schools are taught by the actors of the given theatre, thus ensuring continuation of the traditions and artistic trends of the given theatre. Each theatre solves the problem of training in direct connection with its own tasks. The existence of a studio school helps the theatre to develop and perfect its own work.

It can be said without exaggeration that the studios of the Art Theatre are the creative experimental laboratories where Stanislavsky's basic theoretical principles have been perfected. These studios have trained a whole galaxy of outstanding Soviet stage directors.

The 1947 graduates of the Nemirovich-

Danchenko Studio, under the Moscow Art Theatre, a group of talented young actors, formed a company within the theatre, with a repertory of its own. The Vakhtangov Theatre's school has in the last ten years produced a large number of actors who have strengthened the company and brought new life into the Vakhtangov Theatre. Founded more than a hundred years ago, the School of the Maly Theatre has given several generations of actors to the Russian theatre. In contrast there is the young studio under the Mossoviet Theatre with its first graduates this year.

Prominent actors and stage directors from the theatres concerned travel over the Soviet Union arranging contests and selecting students for their studios.

Amateur theatrical circles play a tremendous rôle in the training of actors in the U.S.S.R. Circles organised at factories, mills, collective farms, and at Soviet institutions of all kinds are directed, as a rule, by professional stage directors and actors. Each production undertaken by an amateur dramatic circle is accompanied by a series of lectures on dramatic subjects for the members of the circle. The amateur dramatic circles constitute a vast reservoir of actors in the U.S.S.R. The dramatic schools also draw new students largely from this source.

In general, the Soviet theatre is being creatively enriched by its contact with young people who have grown up under the Soviet system. The famous masters of the theatre, in return, transmit their creative experience to members of the younger generation, whom they recognise as worthy of carrying on their work.

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# TWO RUSSIAN PLAYS

Reviewed by  
FRANK JACKSON

## THE CHERRY ORCHARD

at the Old Vic.

### TSAR FEODOR

by the S.C.R. Theatre Section.

THE Old Vic Company's revival of "The Cherry Orchard" at the New Theatre was the third London production of this play in recent months. "The Cherry Orchard" has won a special place in the affections of theatre-goers, and is an irresistible challenge to actors and producers anxious to test their strength.

The exact nature of this challenge is difficult to describe in a few words, but I think it may be fairly summed up in the play's achievement of effect atmospherically, by understatement, and by its being a play essentially demanding group production. All parts are interdependent and, if "The Cherry Orchard" is to achieve anything like its maximum effect, all parts must be well played and, in addition, played inside the general framework. This is not a play for an individual star and supporting players. It is a play for an entire cast of stars.

The Old Vic Company might reasonably have been expected to give us a noteworthy production—for it is a group theatre, whose members have worked together for some considerable time (considerable, that is, as compared with commercial theatre companies), and it is, moreover, a commendably unselfish group, in which it is quite usual to find the main part in one production played by a member of the group who, in other plays, has only a small part. There is no fighting for the limelight here. All this is very much to the good, and yet the revival was an almost complete failure.

I allow myself the "almost" to except the performance of Edith Evans as Madame Ranevsky. Madame Ranevsky may be an uncontrolled, highly emotional person; Edith Evans not only portrayed all her rapidly varying emotions—she portrayed them with such great understanding that she completely won our sympathy. I remember, particularly, her scene with Trofimov in Act 3. With what fiery conviction she turns on him, when he pleads with her to face the truth for once in her life! Then as she tells him what the cherry orchard means to her personally, and recalls the tragic fate of her little son (surely a judgment on her) she weeps, equally convincingly, only, a few seconds later, to laugh at poor Trofimov and mock his puny beard. And there it all was, by some miracle of art, a character "in the round," com-

pletely realised and completely communicated.

Not one of the other characters ever achieved completeness of either realisation or communication. Whatever he may have told us, and however repeatedly, we could not possibly believe that this Lopakhin was a nouveau riche, son of a serf; he would have been much more at home as a respectable cleric in an English country town. Yasha, far from being a yokel with a thin veneer of city culture, was a public school prefect desperately trying to be vulgar. Gaev, when we could hear what he was saying, was as wooden as his beloved book-case; while Varya, on the other hand, rarely ceased weeping. Trofimov (Robert Eddison) was convincing only in those scenes when he was boorishly shy and awkward in company, but his genuine idealism never shone through his poor exterior, and his beautiful prophetic outburst, alone with Varya, went for nothing.

The blame for this failure must, I think, be apportioned between cast and producer. It was clear that insufficient care and study had gone into the production so that we had perhaps some of the letter of the play, but certainly none of the spirit. And, in a sense, the one fine performance only served to falsify the play even further; for what should have been the tragedy of a class, of an entire society, turned out to be the tragedy, deeply moving, it is true, of one individual woman.

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Moscow Art Theatre, the Theatre Section of the S.C.R. gave a reading of the first play to be performed there—A. Tolstoy's "Tsar Feodor." In some ways this was not a fortunate choice—for it is obviously a play which needs to be seen in a setting, against a rich background of scenery and costumes. It took some time, too, for the large numbers of characters to emerge clearly, especially in view of our almost total ignorance of Russian history. Neither did the translation (unhappy blank verse mixture of a stiff fake medievalism and a freer but rather incongruous modern slang) make the audience's task any easier. But, in spite of everything, something of the play's classic quality "came across" and I, for one, wished that we could have an early production of the play here.

And, whatever criticisms may be made of the reading as such, the long and distinguished cast made of the evening a heart-warming and impressive tribute from the acting profession of this country to the Moscow Art Theatre.

# A COLLECTIVE FARM RECEIVES GUESTS

By Donald Seager

**J**UST after the war I visited the Soviet Union as a member of the British Youth Delegation. In the time that has elapsed since then we have seen the tremendous fund of goodwill which the courage of the Red Army had built up in the minds of British people slowly but surely squandered.

The time has come, we are told, to "stand up" to Russia, to cry halt to her policy of nationalist expansion. The Marshall Plan and a new Western European *bloc* are realities which three years ago few of us dreamed could happen . . . would need to happen.

To-day Russia is front page news. But do we know any more about the Russian *people* than we knew during the dark days before Stalingrad? I doubt it. We think in terms of Russia, the cold, impersonal factor at the conference table, rather than of the one hundred and eighty million flesh-and-blood individuals who live their lives within her borders. It is because of this that I think it worthwhile telling of some Russians I met on a visit to the Red October Collective Farm, a visit I shall long remember.

One January evening I was on a hill looking down at the frozen Dnieper. It was 20 degrees below freezing, and my thick leather gloves stuck to the low iron railings against which I leaned. Somewhere along that broad frozen mass of water, reddening now with the pale glow of a Ukrainian sun, beyond the low flat horizon with its scrubby trees, was the Dnieper Dam.

And the magnitude of the scene, the generous scale of all natural things, made it suddenly hard to realise that behind me was the shattered city of Kiev, then with families living in wooden huts and what had once been the basements of tall houses. Hard to remember that among the trees on my left the simple grave of General Vatutin, who died in the liberation of Kiev, lay new and cold, and that from these same trees were hanged a score of partisans.

Two days later we crossed the Dnieper over a temporary wooden bridge which had been built in an energetic fortnight. Past unhappy-looking groups of German prisoners working among the debris, bumping along to the musical clatter of the chains on the rear wheels of the coach, we jolted out of the town. Across the railway, still margined with upturned and burnt-out wagons, through a small clump of grey trees, and we met the vast plain I had seen from Kiev two days before. It was a broad plain of brown and grey, hollowed here and there

with snow, and only the bare trees broke the dead frozen line of the horizon.

**A**FTER driving for nearly two hours, we pulled to a halt at a small group of low houses, and a plump, smiling young woman climbed in. Her name was Natasha. With her fair hair and blue eyes, she looked very much like an English girl, but the long brown coat with its Astrakhan collar, and the white hood drawn over her head reminded us that this was the Ukraine. We soon realised why she had climbed aboard. We needed a guide. What had been a rough road soon became an even rougher, and scarcely discernible, cart track, until finally it seemed to me we were steering from landmark to landmark over the hard fields.

Soon we reached our village, the village of Rogossovski, and Natasha led us, past intensely curious and friendly peasants, into the house of the chairman of the farm.

If we had been visitors from another planet there could hardly have been a greater focus of attention upon that tiny house. It was small, simply furnished with wooden benches and tables, and the whitewashed walls threw the brightness of the outside sky across the faces of our hosts. They were fine, kindly faces. I felt immediately these men were peasants rather than politicians, that the force of the patriotic posters on the walls, though not lost to them, did not override their awareness of the more fundamental challenges which their stock had faced for generations. Every line on those hard, brown hands, every wrinkle in the keen-eyed faces told of their struggle, their work, and of their lives.

War and Fascism seemed for a moment words that could not have the same meaning as in the ruined city we had left. Not so. For in telling the story of his farm, the Chairman referred, without emphasis or sign of bitterness, to the legacy of destruction left them by the war. The way he spoke, Fascism might have been a bad drought or a plague of insects.

An old man to whom I spoke afterwards seemed to sum up this attitude. "The Fascists," he said, with utter scorn in his cracked voice, "they did not know how to use the land." This was his only comment. That the invading armies had killed his cattle, stolen his grain, driven away his horses, and burned his house—all this amounted to less than the fact that they had not known how to use the land—*his* land.

It became clear as we went round the farm that the primitive agriculture from which these peasants had begun to free themselves had returned in the aftermath of war.

With their 850,000 kilogram grain store destroyed, without the three motor trucks, the oil engine at the mill, the small sewing factory, all significant and personal parts of their economy, this community of 700 men and women were back where they had started, even further back.

But hope was there; it was in every bright face. There was a plan, too—a plan which all could see, pinned on the wall of the Chairman's office. The farm comprised 1,984 hectares, and the multi-coloured wall diagram showed 726 of these given over to wheat, oats, barley, clover, potatoes, and peas for the coming year, and 456 hectares were earmarked for pasture. The agronomist explained the farm's part in the national plan, flicking the wall chart with his long fingers. He was paid a fixed salary by the State, and advised the farm committee on all technical matters.

**T**HERE were 290 collective farmers here, 130 of them women. They elected their own committee of five, including the Chairman, and any of these could be removed from office at a month's notice by popular vote. Their job was to integrate the production of this farm with the overall State Plan.

Each farmer was allowed 3,000—6,000 square metres of "personal" land according to his needs and capabilities. He was also allowed to keep, for his family requirements, one cow, one sow, and as many chickens as he cared to feed. The cow, during more normal times, could be bought at a specially favourable price.

The method of running a collective farm has been so often misrepresented, often through confusion with State Farms, where the workers receive a fixed wage, that it may be worthwhile going into some detail, bearing in mind that this aspect of their lives contributes very largely to the outlook, independence, and very real sense of community of people such as these I met on this raw January day.

In the first place, there is an attempt by the State to level up the inequalities of nature so that the farmer in less productive areas has as strong an incentive as his fellow in the richer parts of the U.S.S.R. This may take the form of ploughing the land with tractors from State tractor stations on specially cheap terms, of gifts of seed or fertiliser, or even money subsidies. Again, the State decides a provisional "norm" of production according to the fertility of the soil; approximately 40 per cent. of the total yield is given up to the State, but each farm is allowed to retain all extra produce resulting from its own working efficiency.

Payment to individual farmers is made locally on a "man-day" basis, again using a system of norms. The ploughing of a hectare of land, for example, may be valued as one "man-day," and harvesting will earn so many "man-days" according to the nature of the crop and the amount har-

vested. Routine jobs such as minding of the beasts—and on the "October" farm this meant sleeping in the sheds with them to prevent possible thefts—are taken in turn by the farmers.

At the end of each year every farmer will be credited with so many "man-days" according to his own capacity for work and that of his working family. The total profits of the farm are divided by the total number of "man-days" worked, and shared out proportionately. Each share will consist of produce and money. Thus, in a rich area like the Ukraine each "man-day" may be worth as much as 17 kilograms of corn, 5 kilograms of vegetables, 250 grams of honey, and 1 rouble 50 kopecks in money, whereas a backward farm may distribute only 2 kilograms of corn and 1 rouble per "man-day."

The farmer can sell any surplus from his "acre" plot in the free market at the nearest town, and a leading Soviet economist admitted that during times of scarcity this had the undesirable effect of creating two widely differing price levels, for often during the war produce would cost ten or even twenty times the rationed price when bought in the open market. "But," he pointed out, "in more normal times the price in the open market may fall below the shop price. In 1938, for example, butter costing 24 roubles a kilogram in the shops, could be bought for 18 roubles on the collective farm market."

**T**HIS is the economic background against which these simple people plough their land, feed their beasts, and reap the abundance of Russian harvests. It helped to colour the still picture which I saw around me now. For the fields were indeterminate, iron-hard shapes, and the ponds frozen. The beasts came out from their warm stalls only for water. Only the women looking after the cattle, newly arrived to make good war losses, seemed to be active.

I watched some nondescript poultry pecking their meal from an upturned German helmet. Truly were the swords turned into ploughshares, the horror of the past five years disappearing before the promise of another spring.

I looked around at the simple white houses—all newly built—and felt sorry I could not be here to watch the changing seasons, to wait while the hard tracks softened into mud, to hear the farm tractors as they broke into the soil with the plough; and finally, in the dust of a Ukrainian summer, watch the heavily-laden carts lumber over the fields with their rich burden.

But there was a promise of the new crop in the last year's harvest, and we went into a great barn in which the seed for next year's planting was kept. I let the corn run through my fingers and noticed the agronomist, long since familiar with its every detail and possibilities, doing the same, a look of pleasure and interest turning up the corners of his mouth.



In the evening came the celebration, and if there had been a faint suspicion of formal hospitality flavouring the goodwill of some parties which we had already attended, there was a warmth, a spontaneity and a friendliness here which made it a unique, an unforgettable experience.

As we crowded into the tiny parlour of the largest house in the village, the sun was going down; the fields seemed to close in, and this simple white house became the focal point of the community. Children, men and women, all who could walk, peered in at the windows, and pressed in at the low door. The room was simply furnished with plain wooden chairs and long trestle tables and benches which had been borrowed for the occasion. In the corner an Icon nestled on its brick shelf, from the ceiling, oil lamps were hanging; a few pictures, a bricked-in stove running down one side of the room, and that was all. But the people!

In the centre of the room stood our host, wearing a colourful waistcoat and beaming happily at everyone. There must have been 50 of us in this tiny room.

As soon as we were seated, the toasts began—those formal, extravagant little speeches which all Russians seem to love so much and yet which this time seemed to have an added sincerity and quality of the heart. The decanters of local vodka, a pale pinkish brew with a rooty taste, were pushed insistently around. We started on the cold meat, eating slowly and carefully.

In the far corner, sat the women of the village, bright and buxom in their traditional costume. They began to sing. It was unforgettable music. In haunting unison they sang of the rich Ukrainian soil, of the harvests and of their lives. This informal choir, with a powerful sense of joy, brought the heat of the summer, the passions of season and youth into the tiny room. And so it went on. We exchanged song after song. When we could, we sang together. Soon the meat dishes were empty. In the fashion of Russian meals, we had been nearly two hours at table, but the party had only just begun.

Into this hot, noisy room came the women of the household bearing plates of fish. We blinked, paused, and began to eat. The atmosphere, both in temperature and sociability, grew steadily warmer. The toasts became fewer and less coherent, the music—aided now by a wheezy accordion—wilder and more enthusiastic. At last the fish plates were cleared, but there was more to follow. Roast chickens, one to each plate, were brought in. When even the most capable had at length put aside the chicken, the *piece de resistance* was borne in by our host—a crinkly brown suckling pig, garnished and garlanded, with a lemon corked in its solemn mouth.

AND now the traditional dancing began. Tables were pushed aside, partners thrust on each other by the crush, the accordion pulsed out one of those gay tunes which whip the tiredst

legs into activity, and with a young Red Army soldier beating the rhythm on a tambourine, the whole room went into a mad riotous dance. Heads bobbed so close and quickly that nationality was lost in a frenzy of movement and colour; legs and arms were at all angles in the tight, time-oblivious mass, the pictures rattled, the oil lamps swung to the rhythm which vibrated the whole house.

The dance was the signal for a general invasion of that already overcrowded room and, somehow, old men and women as dark as they were wrinkled, forced their way in, and sat solemnly smiling as the dancers swept past, skirts brushing them, faces moist and shining in the heat of that joyful room.

And so it went on, until there was no breath, no knowledge of place or time, only a knowing of exhausted exhilaration and a tremendous feeling of oneness with all who stood breathless and smiling in that stifling room.

An old man in the corner sang a shrill, toothless solo, and with renewed energy the dancing began again. But the time was coming for our departure. Despite the many invitations to stay the night in that snug, wonderful village, we knew we must go. And we stood, dancers clasped tightly, the older people chatting as they beamed and nodded, and everyone talking excitedly, until the poor interpreters, who had long since lost control of the situation, finally gave up, and the conversation, only understood by sheer wanting, bubbled and eddied in the hazy atmosphere.

The English have never been considered an emotional race, but the affection and sentiment of those tender farewells must have overturned that opinion in the hearts of many Ukrainian and Russian people that night. As the motor-coach drew away into the darkness we could hear the fading strains of *Dosfeedanya*—the song of farewell—carried across the snow, and for a few moments, the bright faces and waving hands of these kindly people showed in the light of the open doorway, before night closed down and all was silent inside and outside the jolting bus.

Tired and yet strangely without tiredness, happy and yet without words full enough to express the magic of the moment, we travelled the bumpy road back to Kiev.

And, whenever I think of the Soviet Union, I shall not linger long in the shadow of the battlement walls of the Kremlin or loiter even in the beauty of the Byzantine churches, nor shall I rest for many moments on the quiet edge of the Black Sea, before I am back among the people whom in one short, unforgettable day, I came to know and to love. These toilers on the rich Ukrainian plains, through the years of struggle, have retained, and will—I believe—always retain, a charm and a beauty that make them a living testament to the potential greatness of human kind.

The white expanse of the Dnieper came into view and, rising sheer above it, the black edge of ruined Kiev.

# Problems of Soviet Aesthetics

Continued from Page 4

The discussions which have taken place in the pages of "Oktyabr" about whether Soviet man should be drawn psychologically, or from the point of view of his actions, are splitting hairs. The task facing Soviet writers, artists, and musicians is to direct their efforts to realism, and to do this we must work out the aesthetics of socialist realism. One of its main new concepts is the fact that work has become the "hero" of artistic creation for the first time in the history of art.

The form of a work of art must be accessible to (and understandable by) the mass of the people—in other words realistic—which is why the great Russian critics have always so closely linked with realism an understanding of the people. This link between the popular basis of art, and artistic realism, must be strengthened now by our Marxist aesthetics. The Communist Party resolution directed against formalist tendencies in Soviet music calls formalism an anti-democratic, anti-popular trend in art. The popular aspect of Soviet art has a clear and definite social content, which makes it a powerful weapon for the transformation of society to communism. It also means a change in the type of hero. A new hero has come into history—the working class, the peasantry, the people, actively and consciously creating socialist reality.

*Rosenthal's paper was followed by a general discussion, summarised below.*

## GLAGOLEV

**B**OURGEOIS conceptions have not vanished from treatment of the history of literature or, in large measure, from aesthetics and the theory of literature. The views of Veselovsky are still powerful as, for example, in Professor Zhurumsky's work, Kirpotin's book on Dostoyevsky and in the work of Sheitling and Petrov. It is not possible to regard the development of critical realism as a simple and consistent change of one direction for another.

The difference between critical realism and Marxist-Leninist interpretations constitutes the difference between critical realism and socialist realism. The correlation between realism and romanticism cannot be solved mechanically (as Padeyev has done), since romanticism was linked with the idea of a socialist Utopia. To say to-day that romanticism stands above reality, or that it is not part of reality, is a grave mistake, since our reality is both romantic and heroic. Herein lies the qualitative difference between romanticism in the past and romanticism to-day.

## BYALIK

Rosenthal's speech had one "new" idea—his objection to the idea of correlating

realism and revolutionary romanticism. Nevertheless this conception was the one guiding Gorki's aesthetic ideals. Lenin defended Gorki in this stand, and Zhdanov has developed this idea in his speeches. Rosenthal criticised Vera Panova\* for not developing sufficiently the psychology of Soviet people. But she, curiously enough, propagates a theory which exactly corresponds to that put forward by Rosenthal. She does not depict reality from the viewpoint of to-morrow. This lowers the realism. In attacking the idea of the correlation of realism and revolutionary romanticism, Rosenthal failed to take into account the ideological struggle in progress abroad. The one thing that made the French "personalistes" furious was Zhdanov's statement that one must look at to-day from the viewpoint of to-morrow. Blanchard and his supporters stated that this constituted a departure from realism. To-day, when world reaction is trying to attack the principle of socialist realism, it attacks revolutionary romanticism first of all.

It is true that many profound and correct ideas are contained in the works of Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, and Dobrolyubov, but it seems to me that the re-coining of old ideas is a strange method of advancing aesthetic theory. Rosenthal has forgotten that writers are "the engineers of the soul," in Stalin's phrase, and that to-day one can no longer be content with the definition that "art is a mirror of life." A new definition must be sought.

Rosenthal considers that Socialist realism differs from the realism of the past in that we have welded together realism and ideology, which was impossible in the past. But did not Saltykov-Shchedrin do just this? Rosenthal defines Socialist realism as the most consistent realism because it is the most ideological. What does that mean? It is the realism at the foundation of which there lies the principle of a Communist spirit. All this is true, but it has been known for a long time, and it fails to answer the question as to what constitutes Socialist realism. It is clear to me that one

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\*Vera Panova. Stalin prize-winner for her war novel "Fellow-Travellers" (1946), and her novel on factory life "Kruzhilikh" (1947).

"Fellow-Travellers" available in shortened translation in "Soviet Literature" Nos. 6 and 8, 1946, and "Kruzhilikh" in "Soviet Literature" Nos. 2 and 3, 1948. Articles in Russian on her work appear in "Znamya" No. 6, 1947, "Oktyabr" No. 2, 1948, "Zvezda" No. 4, 1948, and "Znamya" No. 7, 1948. A brief article on her appears in the "Anglo-Soviet Journal," Vol. IX, No. 3 (Autumn, 1948).

cannot advance æsthetic theory in this manner. We have documents from the Party in which the most fundamental and important things have been said. We have the Party resolutions, and Zhdanov's great speeches, we have Gorki's theory of æsthetics. We must look at everything that takes place round us, in literature and life, in the light of these statements, and also play an active part ourselves. This is a more difficult task than the refurbishing of old principles, but it is the only path along which we can collectively fulfil the call of the Party and really advance our æsthetic theory.

#### ABALKIN

THE discussion on the mutual relations and connections between realism and romanticism is being carried on divorced, to some extent, from reality. If you think about some of the best 19th century Russian national culture, you will see that it connected romanticism and realism. Rosenthal's mistake is that, in defining socialist realism, he has forgotten about our own reality and the art and literature which reflects this reality.

Instead of a description of how romanticism runs counter to realism, he should have given a definition of romanticism in our contemporary and socialist sense. Such a definition would have shown that romanticism can perfectly well exist side by side with realism, naturally and organically, and with no conflict. A definition of socialist realism must be based on the generalisation of the concrete experience of artistic creation. Only thus can we advance our philosophical thought.

The problem of socialist realism cannot be solved outside that of the freedom of artistic creation. This freedom consists in service to Socialism and in freely serving the people. In socialist reality the Party directs the spontaneous development of art, and the spontaneous creation of the artist, into an organised channel. This organisational factor does not, in any way, limit the freedom of artistic creation, a fact which must be made clear in our æsthetic theory, exposing as we do so the untruth and hypocrisy of the bourgeois battle-cry about the freedom of artistic creation. The practice of Soviet art has shown that in the development of Soviet culture, new principles have arisen, principles non-existent up to now in the history of world culture. The problem of the freedom of artistic creation in a socialist society must be worked out in a philosophical form, taking into account the enrichment that reality has brought to our art.

#### MATZ

The national features of our art were not touched on at all in Rosenthal's speech. A further shortcoming was his failure to make concrete applications of æsthetics in the various branches of art. Only one aspect was in fact dealt with—realism and romanticism—and even this aspect was not fully

discussed. He said that romanticism is "thought." This definition is totally insufficient and inadequate in any branch of art. If one agrees with his definition, then Utopian novels can be classed with the romantics, which is incorrect. Utopianism and romanticism are not one and the same thing. As we understand it, revolutionary romanticism is not a yearning for unattainable ideals, nor mystical exaltation, nor an embellishment of reality. What is it, then? Revolutionary romanticism springs from the very foundations of socialist realism and, when we are clear about this, it will be necessary to call romanticism something else.

Terminology is still very poor in æsthetics. Romanticism, realism, the classical are understood in many ways. But the problem with which we are faced is not to render terminology more accurate, but to get at the essence of the problem.

A battle is raging in the Union of Architects against formalism, against the group of architects known as the "Zholtovsky school." According to Zholtovsky\* nature, as it was understood by the natural philosophers of the Renaissance, is the foundation of æsthetics. There are many supporters of this view, but unfortunately the battle is not being fought on the correct theoretical ground, since many architects cannot distinguish between materialist and idealist æsthetics. Zholtovsky offers us an abstract, speculative understanding of form, as though it were a materialist understanding of art and architecture. True, this is a special problem, but the solving of such special æsthetic problems has a political as well as a theoretical importance.

#### NEDOSHIVIN

The question of the connection between realism and romanticism, round which the main discussion has developed, is far from being the only question in Marxist æsthetics upon which we must concentrate our attention. Byalik's statement has still not made clear to us what socialist realism is. Rosenthal only touched on one tendency in bourgeois art, and one which is an expression of the collapse of that art, the tendency towards the destruction of objective graphic forms. Nevertheless, particular danger exists in those trends of contemporary bourgeois æsthetics, which claim that their art and their æsthetics are realistic. It is very significant that the reactionary tendencies in contemporary bourgeois art try to depict themselves in a realistic light. The attempt of the bourgeoisie to revert to realistic forms is also evidence of the fact that the demand for realistic art is strong among the masses of the people, who can be influenced by realistic forms.

\*I. V. Zholtovsky. Born 1866. Designer of the Supreme Court building in Moscow, pavilions for the 1923 All-Russian Agricultural Exhibition, the State Bank in Moscow, &c. Doyen of lecturers and teachers at the Moscow Architects' School

Rosenthal's development of the theme of the correlation of romanticism and realism was correct, because it would be extremely naive to imagine that socialist realism is some sort of, if not arithmetical, at least chemical, synthesis of realism and romanticism. From this viewpoint arises the whole mistaken and dangerous tendency of regarding realism as an incompletely developed form of art.

Such an understanding of realism bases itself, in essence, on the bourgeois understanding of the beautiful. There is an unavoidable separation in bourgeois art between the depiction of reality and the understanding of beauty. The art of socialist realism does not demand that the beautiful be brought into art from outside. It proposes the discovery of the beautiful in reality itself.

What, then, is beautiful? It is, in the first place, the new man, his creative work; it is the creative activities of the people, directed towards the construction of a Communist society, and the defence of the achievements of Socialism. Revolutionary romanticism in our art is the discovery of the idea brought to life. The fundamental difference between the methods of socialist and bourgeois realism lies in their application of the principle of the changing of reality. Rosenthal's speech implies that the only difference between bourgeois and socialist realism lies in the subject of art. This is incorrect, since we must seek this difference, not only in the subject, but in the method. To make clear our understanding of socialist realism, we must base ourselves on the practice of our Soviet art and, at the same time, draw conclusions from and make generalisations on, not the average work of art, but on that aesthetic ideal towards which our art is striving. In Soviet society this ideal corresponds to reality.

If we understand that our art has no task other than that which faces the entire Soviet people, other than the struggle for Communism, then it will become clear why it is that the question of a Communist outlook is so important.

#### SARABYANOV

I HAVE nothing to quarrel with in Rosenthal's speech, but he failed to tell his audience about the situation which exists to-day in different fields of Soviet art. The artistic theories which assert that the object of art is the beautiful are a thing of the past. The object of art is life, and we must demand of art that it reflects life and our times in the forms of art. How does Soviet art reflect our times? At one time the constructivists held the field in architecture. An end was put to their tricks. But other types of formalism in architectural practice took their place.

In the Institute of Architecture the majority of the teachers come from the Zholtovsky school and, it must be admitted, among them are some of the cleverest and most talented architects—people like

Zakharov and Chernishova. Their entire attention is, unfortunately, turned on the past. They take the best architecture of past periods and think that they can mechanically adapt it to the present. Classical forms can sometimes be adapted for a museum or a theatre, but can one build a Soviet village hall in the Gothic style? The formalists completely fail to understand that a form must be found which corresponds to the content. These young architects from Zholtovsky's school genuinely want to adopt a Marxist view of aesthetics, and they must be helped in every way.

There are other architects, such as Konstantinov, who think that the greatness of our period can only be expressed in gigantic buildings. He plans gigantic, many-storeyed buildings, forgetting that size is not greatness. The theory of architecture, both abroad and at home, has so far been formalist in outlook. Since the Communist Party resolution on art, architects must start taking note not only of form but of content also.

#### LESUCHEVSKY

The shortcomings in Rosenthal's speech result from his examining the problems of the method of socialist realism without taking into account practice or the living development of Soviet art, and of literature in particular. If he had taken into account, and generalised from, the rich experience of our literature, this alone would have prevented his giving such a narrow, insufficient, and therefore incorrect, definition of socialist realism as a reflection only of Soviet life. Such a definition excludes from socialist realism works depicting past and present bourgeois reality—as, for example: A. Tolstoy's "Peter I," Elmar Green's "Wind From the South," K. Simonov's "Russian Question," and others. The methods of socialist realism develop on the basis of a new, socialist reality, but this does not mean that it is simply realism "added" to a new reality. The method itself contains within it something qualitatively new, something new in a revolutionary sense by comparison with previous realism.

#### KOLPINSKY

Rosenthal's speech did not mention national forms of art, wherein there develops a definite socialist content in popular cultures. This is an important problem not only for the Soviet Union, but also for the new democracies. Another aspect of the same problem can show how the formulation of a national artistic culture makes this same national culture international, worldwide in its application. Rosenthal's description is deficient, because he does not link up his theoretical formulation with what is actually happening in art.

It is wrong to measure socialist realism only by the amount of reality which it depicts. It is insufficient to say that the particular characteristic of socialist realism is only the content of our own reality. It is insufficient because socialist realism im-



plies not only content but the very method and æsthetic form which arises out of socialist reality. Socialist realism can take as its subject non-socialist reality, and can depict this more profoundly and completely than can any other art form. The great scope of the method of socialist realism lies also in its ability to depict æsthetically the further development of society and to distinguish between that which is transitory and that which is developing and moving forward. It is on this basis that one must solve the problem of the connection between realism and romanticism, which was solved in a one-sided manner by both Rosenthal and Bialik—the former because he denied that any positive elements had been contributed to socialist realism, and the latter because of his mechanical addition of the realism and romanticism of the past, which allegedly existed independently.

Romanticism is one of the most direct forms of the realist method. The particular characteristic of our socialist realism is that romanticism makes possible the artistic idealisation of our reality, instead of just creating romantic thoughts about our reality's future.

#### OZEROV

In essence the problem of the connection between realism and romanticism has been solved by Zhdanov on the basis of Lenin's definitions. The problem now is to put the theory to practical use in uniting realism and romanticism in the various arts and in literature. This connection must be based on the living practice of the arts, and not on a purely logical analysis of the romantic and realistic art forms, nor from previously laid down æsthetic forms.

An important problem in the æsthetics of socialist realism is that of the ideal, of the positive hero. Russian classical literature is filled with the search for an ideal, for a positive hero, and this search is particularly marked in revolutionary democratic literature, which found the solution in depicting the revolutionary man trying to transform society. The difficulty was that heroes of the pre-revolutionary period could not be representatives of the politically-conscious working class and remained solitary figures, out-of-the-ordinary people. Only Gorki found the hero among those to whom the future belongs—among the revolutionary proletariat.

Soviet literature must depict our contemporary positive hero, which will be a concrete formulation of the beautiful in the æsthetic sense. Those forms which most fully embody our socialist life and the new socialist qualities of the many millions of Soviet people are beautiful for us.

#### GROSHEV

**D**URING the years 1921-1926, formalism, under the guise of "innovation," was present in the Soviet cinema, and this similar "innovation" is evident at the present time

among several comrades who, it is claimed<sup>\*</sup> played a big part in the formation of Soviet cinema. An incorrect evaluation is given, for example, in Lebedev's "History of the U.S.S.R. Cinema,"<sup>\*</sup> although the book has many good points. Lebedev underestimates the part played by the realist actors of the Moscow Art Theatre. Such a formulation implies that the roots of Soviet film art go back into western decadent cinema art. In fact, the roots of Soviet cinema art can be traced back into Russian graphic and theatrical art, into Russian classical literature. The best films made during the rise of Soviet cinema, "Battleship Potemkin" (Eisenstein), "Mother" (Pudovkin), were confirmations of realism and linked with the realistic traditions of Russian art, and, in particular, with the school of the Moscow Art Theatre, linked with the destruction of formalism on which both Eisenstein and Pudovkin wrote.

The danger at the present time is not in the resurrection of the formalism of the '20's, the ugliness of which is obvious to all, but in the rise of a new kind of formalism. Our script writers and directors, instead of unfolding and showing the conflicts which arise from the particular characteristics of our socialist society, take another line, and only depict the general situation without developing the essence of the relationship between people in our country. The possibility of mechanically transferring dramatic situations from bourgeois art to Soviet art is justified by the bourgeois theory of dramaturgy which considers that a dramatic subject is independent of the nature of social relations, and that this subject can be adapted to any society as long as the external forms are altered.

The harmfulness of this theory is self-evident. Despite this fact, the bourgeois theories of cinema art are not only not criticised in some published books, but are even praised. An example is the collection of articles on D. W. Griffith, edited by Eisenstein and Yutkevich, in which there is no criticism of the reactionary ideology of this bourgeois film producer, but only praise of the form of his art, viewed apart from its reactionary content.

#### TRAPEZNIKOV

The fact that the theory of architecture is in a sorry state is evidenced by the recent discussion which has taken place on the book "Gradostroitelstvo." Shkvarikov, Bunin, Polyakov, and others demonstrated the formalist approach of the book; a plenary session of leading Moscow architects, following on the resolution on the Muradeli Opera, was called. The problem of the fight against formalism in architecture was raised at this plenary session but was not solved, since

<sup>\*</sup>N. A. Lebedev. Author of a "History of the Cinema in the U.S.S.R." Vol. I, on the silent cinema, appearing late in 1947, has been criticised among film workers and in cultural journals. Available in S.C.R. Reference Library.

the discussion was on a low theoretical level.

While incorrect theories are propagated by Matz, Zholtovsky develops his idealistic viewpoint on architecture, and there are many students steeped in the latter's ideas, which ignore entirely the social role of architecture. Zholtovsky's supporters hold to the belief of the "eternal" significance of principles in building, which apparently exist independently of their times. Zholtovsky considers that building develops not in time but in space. It is, therefore, no accident that Zholtovsky's students seek their inspiration from long dead-and-gone masters, with the result that their practical work is far divorced from our own times.

#### KUZNETSOV

The discussion has wandered away from the most important problems—the Communist spirit and popular art, the problems of the correlation of the national and the international in art, the struggle against homeless cosmopolitanism, and has become concentrated mainly on the connection between realism and romanticism.

The science of Soviet aesthetics at the present time is in a most unsatisfactory state—there are no chairs of aesthetics, no aesthetic courses in higher educational institutions, nor any serious theoretical work on these problems. The question of the artistic representation of work in a socialist society and our attitude towards pre-socialist realism, are most important problems for our aesthetics. Pre-socialist realism was not single and unchanging—it developed in history. The history of art is the history of the increasingly profound development of an artistic knowledge of the world. The problem of labour remained unsolved by writers of the past, including the Russian critical realists. Only socialist realism can solve this problem. Soviet writers and artists try to depict the world of the hero from within, when our socialist man masters by labour the surrounding world and performs great deeds. That is the fundamental new quality of realism which the old realism did not possess.

#### LUKANOV

Where aesthetics has not been worked out as a science, all spheres of art are held back. The scientific study of aesthetic problems must not lead to the development of abstract aesthetics which seek to force all aspects and forms of socialist art into a single, static frame. This study should lead to the discovery of the new qualitative content which the aesthetic ideals of our society contain. Side by side with the problem of beauty arises the problems of that which elevates, the tragic and the comic, which Rosenthal omitted entirely from his speech. The main shortcoming in Rosenthal's speech was the fact that he drew his conclusions not so much from life as from previously-thought-out schemes and categories.

It is imperative that a distinction be made between socialist and pre-socialist roman-

ticism. Rosenthal's mistake in this respect lies in the fact that when he deals with revolutionary romanticism as the creative beginning of socialist realism, he is influenced by the traditional literary conception that romanticism is indissolubly linked with philosophical idealism. He also failed to deal with the important question of the link between aesthetics and ethics.

*M. M. Rosenthal replied to the discussion as follows:—*

THOSE who have spoken in the discussion have criticised my speech for its failure to review the situation in various branches of the Soviet arts. I would say, firstly, that it is impossible in a single speech to cover all branches of the arts; and, secondly, it is difficult to have a knowledge of all the arts sufficient to criticise and speak of them all.

The second criticism levelled against the speech was its failure to contain sufficient concrete material to bear out the theoretical principles put forward. I accept this criticism, although it was a difficult task to furnish a large number of practical examples in a speech designed to cover general problems of Marxist aesthetics.

The central feature of the discussion was the problem of socialist realism which is fundamental to our Soviet aesthetics. Soviet art and literature are faced with the depiction of a new stage in the history of human society, the depiction of new social relations, and the new men of Soviet society. In such circumstances the methods of Soviet art are of primary importance.

The essence of our differences, expressed during the discussion, does not lie in the fact that B. Byalik and others recognise revolutionary romanticism as a foundation, while I and others reject it. The fact of the matter is that B. Byalik and others, bringing everything down to romanticism, draw the artist away from reality and fail to see that socialist realism is the most consistent and profound form of realism.

Our reality, the struggle of our Party, our world outlook explain why revolutionary romanticism is an indissoluble part of socialist realism.

The tasks which face us came out in the discussion. They are:—(1) Struggle against bourgeois decadent art and bourgeois aesthetics; struggle against formalism and naturalism, against the remnants of bourgeois ideology and aesthetics in Soviet literature and art, struggle against liberalism, objectivism, and so on. (2) A positive formulation of the problems of Soviet aesthetics, of the classical heritage and its relationship to Soviet art: a positive formulation of socialist realism as the method of Soviet art, of the part which labour plays in Soviet art, and of the national content in the latter; and finally a positive formulation of the national character of Soviet art in its indissoluble connection with Soviet patriotism.

# PAUL JABLOCHKOFF—A PIONEER OF ELECTRIC LIGHTING

By Hugh P. Vowles, M.I.Mech.E.

**P**AUL JABLOCHKOFF was born on September 14th, 1847, the year in which Thomas Alva Edison and Alexander Graham Bell also were born. He became an engineer-officer in the Russian Army, and was entrusted in 1869 with various electrical investigations at the Ecole Galvanotechnique in St. Petersburg. A little later his duties were extended to include the supervision of the telegraph lines from Moscow.

Towards the end of 1875, Jablochkoff left Russia on a visit to the exhibition at Philadelphia, but got no further than Paris, where he proceeded to develop an entirely novel type of electric arc lamp, which soon became widely known as "Jablochkoff's Electric Candle."

At that time the only practicable way of producing electric light was by means of arc lamps, connected with a direct current source of supply. There were many types of arc lamp, but in general they consisted essentially of two opposed carbon rods or electrodes, actuated by mechanism which first brought them into contact for a moment and then drew them apart a short way for the current to arc across between the ends of the rods, thus producing the light.

The clockwork or other mechanism employed had also to keep the ends of the rods a fixed distance one from the other, neither separating them too far apart nor bringing them into contact. Automatic regulation was all the more difficult to achieve because the positive electrode burned away much faster than the negative, whilst the rate of burning in both electrodes was affected by irregularities in the composition of the carbons.

In consequence it was very rarely that a light could be produced which was both uniform and continuous. There was a good deal of flickering, hissing, and spluttering, and from time to time the light was liable to go out altogether. Rules for the prevention of fire drew attention to the danger due to falling pieces of incandescent carbon and to ascending sparks. It was to eliminate such defects and to dispense altogether with the need for adjusting mechanism that Jablochkoff introduced his simple but highly ingenious and successful "candle," for which he secured his first patent on March 23rd, 1876.

The official history of the Institution for Electrical Engineers contains the following

note:—"In April, 1877, there appeared in a Paris newspaper, *La France*, a notice that caused the electricians of the world to think and to wonder." The notice was worded as follows:—

"A Russian engineer-officer has found the means of keeping the carbon points together in electric lamps without the use of electric regulators. M. Jablochkoff substituted for this costly and delicate apparatus a candle composed of two carbons placed side by side, and separated by, and enveloped in, an insulating and fusible substance. It is already known that not only is the Jablochkoff candle better than any clockwork regulator, but that it is also possible to get several lights from an electrical machine.

**A**N account of Jablochkoff's invention had already been presented to the Académie des Sciences by the President (M. Dumas), who characterised the invention as a great step in the problem of electric lighting.

Before 1880, apart from street and shop lighting in Paris, Jablochkoff's candles were installed in various parts of London, notably along the Thames Embankment from Westminster to Waterloo Bridge, along Holborn Viaduct, and other thoroughfares of the City of London, in Billingsgate Market and the West India Docks, whilst a considerable number of private firms in London, Liverpool, and elsewhere adopted this form of lighting.

Popular enthusiasm was before long diverted to the incandescent filament lamps of Swann, Lane-Fox, and Edison. But though the candle was superseded, in improving it Jablochkoff was led to make a pioneer and permanent contribution to modern methods of electricity generation and distribution.

For, finding at an early stage that his candle was unsuitable for use in direct current circuits, owing to the uneven burning of the positive and negative carbons, he turned his attention in 1877 to the possibilities of the alternator. It is on record that the Gramme alternator, itself a landmark in electrical engineering history, was specially designed by Gramme to suit the Jablochkoff candle, whilst Jablochkoff himself evolved and made use of transformers in his system of electrical distribution, at the same time advocating the use of high-voltage transmission.

Jablochkoff eventually returned to Russia, where he died on March 19th, 1894.

# NOTES AND NEWS

## Facts and figures about life

## and work in the U.S.S.R.

### Reconstruction

**Power Trains.**—The power train, a power station mounted on wheels, which moves along railway lines, was first produced in the U.S.S.R. It sets in motion various devices used in construction, provides power for illumination of workers' settlements, and can consume any kind of local fuel. The first power train, of 4,000 kilowatts, was used at the construction site of the tractor plant in the Altai in 1938.

Power trains were used in the restoration of the mines in the Donets coal-mining basin and of 11 big power stations, of 20 large plants, and 52 war-damaged towns. Now they are employed at construction sites of power stations and plants in various regions of the U.S.S.R.

**In Byelorussia.**—The rehabilitation of villages in Byelorussia is nearly complete. Andrei Temkin, in charge of village and collective farm building work under the Council of Ministers of the Republic, reports that since the war 350,000 homes have been built in village areas.

Over 6,000 schools, hospitals, reading rooms, clubs, creches, &c., have been put up by village builders. Building still continues: over 32,000 houses are in process of erection. Parks, public gardens, stadiums and sports grounds are being laid out in all villages.

**Stalingrad.** Rebuilt are the city's main avenues, the large department store, and a pedagogical institute. Already functioning are the new agricultural college, 74 schools, and a new cinema. The shipyards topped their production quota for nine months; the tractor plant has been completely rebuilt and re-equipped, and has regained its pre-war output.

**Novorossiisk.** Ten huge plants which operated before the war are functioning again, many enterprises of local industry are at work, while ships of many different countries are being loaded in the port.

**Odessa.** Three hundred rebuilt factories and plants are working in Odessa to full capacity, producing agricultural machinery, powerful cranes, equipment for the metal and mining industries, and for ship repair. The port has been rebuilt and equipped with the most up-to-date machinery.

In the years following the end of the war

many houses have been rebuilt, covering a total floor space of over a million-and-a-half square feet. Odessa's ten theatres, all libraries, palaces of culture, and clubs are functioning again. Twenty-five thousand students are studying in 17 higher educational institutions, and 30 scientific research institutes are at work in the city. Many sanatoria and rest homes have been restored.

**Bryansk.** During the last five years the locomotive works, a road machinery engineering works, several cement factories, and other industrial establishments have been restored, and six factories for making prefabricated houses have been erected. These six factories have restored homes for thousands of homeless farmers.

Two districts totally destroyed by the Germans have new streets laid out and 21 new secondary schools, as well as several technical and factory schools. A new building for the local drama theatre will be completed shortly.

### Development

**Lvov.** During the past three years over 1,000 million rubles have been invested in the building and reconstruction of Lvov industrial undertakings. The number of workers now employed in the city's industries has increased four-fold compared with 1939. There are more than 400 undertakings producing telegraphic apparatus, lathes, agricultural machinery, equipment for the food industry, electric lamps, precision instruments, cycles, metal-cutting instruments, window glass, electrical fittings, and many other goods that formerly were not produced here. Now automobile assembly and cycle plants, lorry works, a plant for the production of fats, and a huge flour mill are being built.

**Kara-Kum Canal.** Work is in progress on the 625 miles long canal, and it will be the biggest irrigation canal in the Soviet Union.

**Esthonia.** In 1947 the level of industrial production reached that of the pre-war period, and in 1948 it exceeded it. Slate production in 1948 exceeded that of 1940 by over 50 per cent. Construction of the first section of the gas plant and gas pipeline to Leningrad has been completed, two



new powerful mines and one electric power station are now in operation, and new towns and settlements with modern facilities are being built in the slate-producing area.

In Tallinn, the Baltic railway station, the Estonian theatre, the Academy of Sciences, and the central public library, have been entirely rebuilt. Two inhabitants were left in Narva at the time of liberation from German invaders; present population is 20,000. Extensive work has been carried out in the restoration of the university town of Tartu.

Despite unfavourable weather conditions, the aggregate grain harvest in 1948 exceeded that of 1939. There were only four collective farms in 1947, and in 1948 their number reached 224.

Over 80 million rubles will have been expended before completion of the five-year plan for construction of cultural and educational institutions, schools, and hospitals in Estonian villages. In 1948 in the Harjumaas District alone 15 million rubles were allocated for this purpose.

Estonian peasants are building cultural centres with their own funds. Similar centres were opened in three more localities. Now there are 88 new Houses of Culture and 120 libraries in this district; over 11,000 pupils now attend schools, which is 50 per cent. more than in 1939.

Formerly in this district, with a population of 100,000, there was not one single hospital or creche, or medical clinic for women. Now it has 14 hospitals, 26 medical centres, six creches, one orphanage, one rural sanatorium, one epidemiological station, and one tubercular dispensary. Nine power stations are at work compared with the previous one.

**Lithuania.** The Republic's industry grew by 37 per cent. in the last two years. Over 1,700 enterprises—engineering plants, food factories, and light industry enterprises—have been expanded and equipped with up-to-date machinery of Soviet make.

In 1950 Lithuanian factories will produce 4,500,000 metres of linen. Following the war 92,000 landless and other peasants received 650,000 hectares (1.6 million acres) of land free and in perpetuity, cattle, implements, and farm buildings. Fifty-eight machine and tractor stations with hundreds of tractors, and 150 machine and horse-hiring centres have been set up.

## Agricultural

**Wheat.**—Experimental allotments of winter multi-eared wheat were established last year on fields of the grain State farms situated in five different districts of Stavropol Territory. Workers of a State farm in the Kuban had a yield of 4.3 tons per acre.

**Record Crop.** A record rice harvest of six tons per acre has been secured this year by Ibraim Zhakhayov, a Kazakhstan col-

lective farmer, in a steppe region with a severe climate of snowstorms and blizzards in winter and scorching heat burning the grass in summer.

**The Yield Doubled.**—Over 2,000 scientific workers in some 170 institutes are engaged in agricultural problems in the Ukraine. The Odessa Institute of Genetics and Selection has developed a new variety of wheat for the Southern regions which gives an average yield of 26 to 27 centners per hectare (2,340 to 2,430 lbs. per acre). A method of additional pollinisation of plants increases the yield of maize by 4 to 5 centners per hectare, and of sunflower, rye, and buckwheat by 2 to 3 centners per hectare. This resulted in an addition of over 8 million centners of cereals to last year's harvest.

**Industrial Crops.**—New industrial crops, such as an Euphorbia species containing oleic acid, are being introduced into Soviet agriculture. The cultivation of Kanatnik, whose fibres by a new process can produce string, is extending to new regions.

Soviet selectionists have produced a new variety of batat, the sweet potato, with an enhanced yield of sugar, which has been adapted to the moderate climate of the Ukraine. The quinine plant is beginning to be cultivated in sub-tropical areas as an annual.

**Machines.**—This year's agricultural machines of new design include a grain-sowing and manuring machine, simultaneously sowing the grain and fertilising the soil, (the use of which has increased the yield by 180 to 270 lbs. of wheat per acre); a new rice-harvesting machine; a horse-drawn hemp-threshing machine, (which has quadrupled production); machines for cotton and tobacco plantations, for the first stage in cultivation of flax, and for horticulture and viticulture.

**Sheep.**—By mating the wild mountain ram—the Arkhar—with the Merino ewe, a new breed of sheep (the “Arkhar Merino”) has been evolved, of which there have already been three generations on the “Kzyl-Tu” collective farm in Kazakhstan.

The sheep has long sturdy legs, with hard hooves, and is very agile; the wool is superior to that of the Merino, and it weighs considerably more than the local sheep. Last year 367 ewes gave birth to 478 lambs of the Arkhar Merino breed.

## Industry

**Iron and Steel.**—The enterprises under the Chief Administration of the Metal Industry of the Urals have fulfilled the 11-month plan for the entire production process ahead of time. In 10 months and 12 days the smelting of pig iron increased by 15.5 per cent., steel by 12.5, rolled metal by 11 per cent., as compared with the figures for the corresponding period of last year.

**Coal.**—The construction of nine new large coal mines has begun in the Donets coal basin. One of the important mines in this group will yield twice as much coal as the largest Donets mines at present operating. Mechanisation of all processes at the new and reconstructed mines will considerably increase coal output.

**Reducing Production Costs.**—By the application of improved methods and strict accounting, a leather factory in Yaroslavl reduced production costs by 9.2 per cent. above plan in seven months. A textile mill in Tbilisi reduced costs in the current year by 9.5 per cent. The "Krasnoye Sormovo" steel mill in Gorky reduced costs per ton of steel by 25 per cent.

The Donets miners, as well as miners in other coalfields, have been able to reduce production costs by means of mechanisation of coal-mining.

Conveyor-belt methods introduced at the agricultural machinery works in Lubertsy reduced work hours for each machine from 40 to 24. Baku oil engineering plants have decided to save not less than 11 million rubles this year above plan by reducing production costs. In Kursk, 13 plants undertook to make savings amounting to 6 million rubles above plan.

**Hunting Season.**—In the Narym district over 200 hunters are out for furs—squirrels, ermines, and foxes. To help the hunters over 100 hunting cabins have been built in the forests in recent years to provide sleeping accommodation and shelter from snowstorms. Special hunting centres are scattered throughout the forest for the supply of weapons, ammunition, food, and other goods, and for the receipt of skins.

## Transport

**Electric Railways.**—One of the longer lines (1,250 miles) to be opened by the end of 1948, links Novosibirsk in Central Siberia with Kuzbas on the west slope of the Altai Mountains. The South Urals railway line, when finished, will be part of the largest electric trunk line in the world (2,350 kilometres long.)

## Housing

**Building Materials.**—In the first half of the present year the building industry exceeded the pre-war output. New equipment brought into operation this year makes it possible to double the output of bricks as compared with last year, and to increase the output of cement and roofing materials by 50 per cent. Cost of production during the period was reduced by 4 per cent.

**Miners' New Homes.**—More than 100,000 miners celebrated Miners' Day in new homes.

The town of Raichikhinsk, in the vicinity of the large coal deposits in the Far East, started four years ago; it has many apartment houses, 15 schools, 5 clubs, 3 hospitals, &c. Nearly 10,000 miners' families have moved into new homes in the towns and settlements of the Kuznetsk coalfields, West Siberia.

## Living Standards

**The Village.**—Four times as many large rural power stations were launched in 1948 as in 1947. Full electrification of collective and State farms is nearing completion in the Moscow, Chelyabinsk, Vladimir, Kharkov, Lvov, and a number of other regions. Over 3,000 electric threshing stations are functioning on collective farms. In cattle-breeding farms electricity is used for water supplies, preparation of fodder, dairy operations, and meat processing. A new electric tractor of Soviet design has passed its test.

**Footwear and Hosiery.**—Byelorussia is now turning out twelve times as much footwear as in 1947, and the Vitebsk hosiery factory, which manufactured 3,500,000 pairs of stockings annually before the war, is now producing 14 million pairs per year.

**More Chickens.**—Some 26,000 new poultry farms have been set up in the Kiev Region by Ukrainian collective farms. About 80 per cent. of the collective farms in the region are rearing water-fowl.

## Education

**Text Books.**—The Armenian State Publishing House has issued 30 different school text books, a total of 1,000,000 copies, including a text book in the Kurdish language, which has appeared for the first time.

**University.**—The first Tadjik State University was opened in Stalinabad in September, with 200 students in its three departments.

Over the past 30 years, 19 universities have been opened in the U.S.S.R.

**Adult Education.**—In eight months, over 1,800,000 Muscovites attended 7,800 lectures in Moscow, arranged by the U.S.S.R. Society for the Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge.

## Science

**Archaeology.**—Last summer the Archaeology Institute of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences sent out an expedition in search of the town of Kolodyazhin, which is mentioned in ancient annals. The leader of the expedition, the prominent Ukrainian archaeologist,

Vladimir Goncharov, said :—

"A Ukrainian expedition established the site of Kolodyazhin, a fortified town which, 700 years ago, defended itself against the hordes of the Tatar Khan Batu. A double rampart and complete artificial moat have been excavated.

"The expedition discovered the town's palace, several dozen dugouts and a large number of weapons, including spears, iron and bone arrowheads, axes, &c.

"In a dwelling dugout were found necklaces and other adornments of coloured glass, domestic ware, ceramic vessels bearing Ukrainian designs, and agricultural implements. In seven dwellings were discovered flour millstones, charred rye, wheat, barley, and millet seeds."

**Astronomy.**—The general catalogue of variable stars compiled by astronomers Kukarkin and Parenage has been published in Leningrad. It gives 1,417 new variable stars and data about 10,912 stars previously discovered as well as the latest information about changes in the luminosity of several thousand variable stars, their spectra, &c.

A group of astronomers of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences, on the proposal of the International Astronomical Union, publishes volumes of the ephemerides of small planets for observatories of the world. The first post-war volume contains data of the ephemerides of 461 planets. Soviet astronomers have now prepared the volume for 1950. Data are being received of 1,563 small planets moving between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter.

**Geobotanical Map.**—A geobotanical map of the flora of the whole Soviet Union has been published. It shows the adaptation of plants to new conditions as in Southern Sakhalin, where orchards are successfully developing over 20 varieties of fruit trees and bushes. The "Hungry" Steppe in Central Asia has changed beyond recognition.

**Medicine.**—Soviet medicine claims to have discovered new methods of combating children's diseases of progressive muscular atrophy. It is stated that a vitamin-E deficiency is to be observed in children suffering from the disease, and treatment with this vitamin has given very positive results. Experiments on its use are still continuing.

## Sport

**Juvenile Athletes.**—Last autumn seven new records were broken at the contests of juvenile light athletes. Galina Zybina, Leningrad schoolgirl, established a new U.S.S.R. record for girls in javelin throwing—44 metres 29 centimetres. She also established a new U.S.S.R. record in throwing the discus—37 metres 27 centimetres.

Juvenile athletes have established a number of records in 1948. Nadezhda

Khnykina, 15 years old, of Tbilisi, did the 100 metres in 12.6 seconds and covered the 400 metres in 61 seconds.

Lyudmila Leontyeva set up a new record for the 200 metres—26.5 seconds.

Sergei Arkharov, a Moscow schoolboy, did the 1,500 metres in 4 mins. 12.4 seconds.

Eighteen-year-old Boris Matveyev put the shot at 12 metres 52 centimetres.

**Swimming.**—More than 10 U.S.S.R. records were set up at the autumn swimming championships, which were preceded by mass contests. The young swimmers Abyazov, Edassi, Borisenko, and Ostapenko were close on the heels of Semyon Boichenko, and Leonid Meshkov, world record holders. Abyazov covered the 400 metre breast stroke in 2 mins. 47 secs. Boichenko took 2 mins. 42.9 secs. Abyazov beat both Boichenko and Meshkov by 11 seconds in the 400 metre race, registering 5 mins. 59.1 secs.

Kapitelina Vassilyeva, swimming free style, covered 1,000 metres in 15 mins. 13.6 secs.

**Swimming Relay.**—A new U.S.S.R. record for the 800 metres swimming relay race was set up by Anatoli Drapy, Victor Gladilin, Leonid Meshkov, and Vitali Ushakov. Swimming free style in laps of 200 metres each, they covered the distance in 9 mins. 14.6 secs., which is 5.4 secs. better than the former U.S.S.R. record. Leonid Meshkov covered his lap in 2 mins. 14.7 secs.

First place for women was won by Nina Kochetkova in the 100 metres free style race. The 100 metre breast stroke for women was won by Tamara Polygalova in 1 min. 28.6 secs.

**High Jump Record.**—A new Soviet record and the best mark in Europe this year were registered in the high jump by Yuri Ilyassov, who cleared the bar at 198 centimetres, at athletic contests held in Gdansk.

## General

**Orthodox Church.**—Missions of three Orthodox Churches, those of Antioch, Serbia, and Bulgaria, have been opened in Moscow.

**Time Service Broadcasts.**—The U.S.S.R. broadcasts a time service very useful to navigators, geodesists, and astronomers. The time signal, given every two hours, is correct to one-hundredth of a second, and comes from the observatory at Pulkovo, issued by use of photo-elements.

**Television.**—The Leningrad Television Centre has been restored and has resumed transmissions after an eight-year interval.

# BOOK REVIEWS

**The Great Conspiracy Against Russia.** By Sayers & Kahn. (Reprint by Boni & Gaer, New York.) Abridged edition obtainable from Collets, 67, Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1.

**T**HIS is a most important book. Very well documented, and giving authority for everything it asserts, it tells the story—fantastic and incredible if it were not shown to be true—of the innumerable efforts made by American, British, and many other enemies of the Soviet Union, throughout its history, to weaken and destroy it.

It is a pity that over two years elapsed after its first appearance in America before substantial supplies at the cheap price of 2s. 6d. could become available in this country; but it nevertheless arrives at a very opportune moment, and it should be read by friends and enemies alike. The latter need it most, and the warning to them is well put up by Senator Claude Pepper, who wrote in the Introduction, in June, 1946, that "a continuation of the disastrous policies of anti-Soviet intrigue so vividly described in this book would inevitably result in a third world war."

The book covers the wars of intervention, British and American interference and espionage, both in those wars and later, anti-Soviet and—of course—anti-Communist propaganda, Trotskyite conspiracies and their foreign connections, and Nazi propaganda in America and elsewhere.

Perhaps the book's most terrifying lesson is the parallel between the events of the years after the first World War and what is happening to-day. At that time, those who wished to restore a powerful Germany achieved their ends by clamouring for "salvation from Communism." As early as November 9th, 1918, two days before the Armistice that closed hostilities, the British Cabinet decided against forcing a collapse of Germany, because "for us the real danger is no longer the Germans but Bolshevism"; and from that time onwards the efforts of many political leaders in Britain, America, and Germany were directed to strengthening Germany, including in due course Nazi Germany, against the Soviet Union.

One learns in this connection how close the links were between anti-Semitism, anti-Communism, and Fascism; and it becomes clear how directly the anti-Soviet campaign in general and the "menace of Bolshevism" story in particular helped to establish German Fascism in power. The very close

connections between White Russian émigrés, anti-Semitic organisations, and such Nazis as the myth-mongering Alfred Rosenberg are disclosed, and we are shown how, during the Second World War, a great majority of these anti-Soviet and anti-Semitic agitators in the U.S.A. turned out to be Nazi agents.

The parallel between the two post-war periods is, indeed, so tragically close that it is not easy at first to decide to which of the two periods the following words refer:—

"Scarcely two months after the Armistice, the Allied Leaders seemed already to have forgotten the purpose for which the great conflict was fought. The 'menace of Bolshevism' swept aside every other consideration."

The book reminds us of the proposals after the first World War to carve up "zones of influence," whereby Great Britain should control both the oil of the Caucasus and the three Baltic Republics (whose re-entry into the Soviet Union, now eight years old, is still not "recognised" by our Government) and the very elaborate and definite schemes for a military attack on the Soviet Union in 1929-30, which was stopped by the American slump of 1929 and onwards.

More important is the vast extent of the Trotskyite conspiracy, its supporters in high quarters, its external links (including, besides the Nazis, Henlein, Doriot, and Ivar Kreuger), and its elaborate machinery for the corruption of Soviet persons travelling abroad; its close connection with the Nazis, and the financial help it had from them; and its ruthless operations of the weapons of terrorism, sabotage, and assassination. As the evidence of the Trotskyite activities depends to some extent on the evidence given in the treason trials of 1936-37, and it is fashionable for British and American statesmen, and others who dislike the Soviet Union to deride this evidence, it is useful that the book should remind us what Ambassador Davies wrote about them:—

"I talked to many, if not all, of the members of the Diplomatic Corps here, and with possibly one exception they are all of the opinion that the proceedings established clearly the existence of a political plot and conspiracy to overthrow the Government. . . . Another diplomat . . . made a most illuminating statement to me. . . . He said that the defendants were undoubtedly guilty; that all of us who attended the trial had practically agreed on that; that the outside world, from the Press reports, however, seemed to think that the trial was a put-up job . . . ; that, while he knew it was not, it was probably just as well that the outside world should think so."

The same Ambassador, after the Nazi



invasion in the summer of 1941, wrote:—

"There was no so-called 'internal aggression' in Russia co-operating with the German High Command. Hitler's march into Prague in 1939 was accompanied by the active military support of Henlein's organisations in Czechoslovakia. The same thing was true of his invasion of Norway. There were no Sudeten Henleins, no Slovakian Tisos, no Belgian Degrelles, no Norwegian Quislings in the Russian picture. . . . The story had been told in the so-called treason or purge trials of 1937 and 1938, which I attended and listened to. In re-examining the record of these cases, and also what I had written at the time . . . I found that practically every device of German Fifth Columnist activity, as we now know it, was disclosed and laid bare by the confessions and testimony elicited at these trials of self-confessed 'Quislings' in Russia. . . .

"All of these trials, purges, and liquidations, which seemed so violent at the time and shocked the world, are now quite clearly a part of a vigorous and determined effort of the Stalin Government to protect itself not only from revolution from within but from attack from without. They went to work thoroughly to clean up and clean out all treasonable elements within the country. All doubts were resolved in favour of the Government. There were no Fifth Columnists in Russia in 1941—they had shot them. The purge had cleansed the country and rid it of treason."

It is significant that so many British politicians who violently criticise the Soviet Government of 1939 for making the agreement of that period with Germany have never a word of disapproval of the Trotskyites who were financed by the Nazis, collaborated with every Fascist element in the world, and were prepared to give the Ukraine to Hitler.

Truly, British politicians who attack the Soviet Union over these trials, and over many other things, should look through this book to see what strange company they keep. Every Nazi agent in America—up to his internment—every Fascist organisation then and to-day, the anti-British Press of Hearst, Patterson and McCormick, every anti-Semite there and everywhere else, with the shade of Goebbels laughing in the background, join with these British Russo-phobes in the cry to "Save the world from Communism" by starting another war against the Soviet Union.

One more impression, general enough to-day but well emphasised by the book, is that of the terrible price we have to pay for invincible ignorance in high quarters, and for the policy of fantastic misrepresentation and suppression of news, coupled with the smearing as a Communist of every American or British writer who utters any even moderately favourable comment on Soviet conduct.

To-day, let me emphasise again, they are repeating all the follies of 1918 onwards,

which built up Fascism, built up German military aggressive power, sought to encircle and destroy the Soviet Union, and ended by causing the second world war in which the Soviet Union had to do much of the work of preventing the Frankenstein they had created from destroying them. One has heard of a sky being black with chickens coming home to roost—but here are the same chickens grown into old boiling fowls and flying the same journey.

D. N. PRITT.

**"I want to belike Stalin."** Translated by George S. Counts and Nucia P. Lodge. (Victor Gollancz.)

I HAVE been reading the weekly Soviet teachers' newspaper regularly for the last six months, and I have not seen any articles on war or war preparation, nor any which give the slightest indication that the teachers and children are war-minded or being subjected to war propaganda.

The whole emphasis is on building up and preparing for a near future in which there will be enough food, clothing, and other necessities for all. The articles deal with the usual educational problems of syllabuses, visual aids, methods of teaching, and the necessity for relating the subject matter of lessons with real processes and practice, especially in the country, in matters of agriculture. The aims of education have been re-stated as the bringing up of a generation which will build communist society and which must therefore be thoroughly cultured and well educated.

The material provided in the book "I Want to be Like Stalin," published by V. Gollancz and "translated" by George S. Counts and Nucia P. Lodge, can provide English people interested in Soviet educational theory with excellent material for study and discussion, and can stand alone without the extremely tendentious introduction by Dr. Counts. Although the translation is poor and inaccurate, the matter which emerges gives some clear indications of the attitude of Soviet educationists to some of the questions which are bothering us to-day.

The following extracts illustrate my arguments:—

PAGE 42.—"With us there are no contradictions between individuality and society. . . . The education of the individual pupil proceeds through the collective, and the collective grows and becomes stronger through the education of each of its members. A collective is not a simple mechanical union of identical children. Every pupil has his own peculiarities, his own needs and interests. Consequently the living concrete school child must be at the centre of attention in education."

PAGE 48.—"Moral conduct does not have great value if the individual complies with regulations merely because 'he is told,' or

because he is threatened with some unpleasant consequence in the event of their violation. A person thus educated conforms to moral rules and standards only where he is under observation. . . ."

PAGE 50.—"Strictness must accord with respect for the dignity of the personality of the child. A. S. Makarenko said: If you should ask me how I would briefly define the essence of my experiment, my answer would be: The making of the greatest possible demands on the individual and the showing to him of the greatest possible respect."

It may be seen from these extracts that the translation is bad. The Russian language is so differently constructed from ours that it requires real art to render into equivalent English what is said in Russian—otherwise it becomes a clumsy travesty of our language, as it has in many parts of the book.

The introduction is full of mistakes and misinterpretations. The "pedologists" mentioned on page 22 were appointed to schools to help the teachers with difficult children; they were psychologists trained in quite a different way from the ordinary teachers. As I was in Moscow during the whole period of this controversy, I am familiar with the facts. It was found that the "problem" children increased greatly in number, and that teachers who found a child in any way a nuisance, turned him out into the pedologists' group in the school.

After much discussion at teachers' conferences and correspondence in the Press, the decision that was arrived at by the then Commissariat of Education seemed the only sensible one—that teachers themselves should have an adequate grounding in psychology and deal with their difficult children, and that any serious problems should be sent to the child guidance clinic to be dealt with by specialists in conjunction with the parent and teacher.

I wonder whether Dr. Counts has ever had to deal with young boys who had spent one or two years with the partisans, living and working as soldiers in conditions unimaginable perhaps by Americans during the war? Is it likely that these little toughs would wish to abandon a life of grown-up danger and adventure for the tame school desk? The Nakhimov and Suvorov Schools gave these youngsters ordinary schooling in the three "R's" and an all-round education in an atmosphere of "camp life" and good uniform suited to their former experience. It is interesting to note that many of the boys after a year or two in these schools asked to be transferred to industrial schools, or to the ordinary ten-year school with a view to a university education.

There are many examples in the introduction of such mis-information or mis-interpretation. It would have been far more useful and impartial to have translated the book into good English and leave the readers to judge for themselves, and to discuss the points with which they disagreed. It would have contributed towards an understanding of the U.S.S.R. instead of

attempting to frighten people with a bogey which does not exist.

DEANA LEVIN.

**The Artamonov Business.** By Maxim Gorki. Translated from the Russian by Alec Brown. (Hamish Hamilton.) 6s.

**The Diary of a Scoundrel.** Adapted by Rodney Ackland. From a Comedy by Alexander Nikolaevich Ostrovsky. (Sampson Low.) 6s.

**THE ARTAMONOV BUSINESS** (1925) is one of the best family saga novels ever written. Ilya Artamonov appears in a town on the Oka soon after the emancipation; with the ruthless energy of a Peter the Great, he builds his factory, which, under his sons, grows "like mould in a cellar."

In the lifetime of his eldest son—a boy when the story opens, and a dying man when it closes with the Revolution—industrial capitalism takes firm root in Russia, rises and falls. The Artamonovs are swept away with it—except for a second Ilya, who becomes a revolutionary. The story is beautifully written, the work of an artist who admired highly the great French novelists.

The characters here in which he took particular interest were Seraphim the carpenter, who 'comforted' people, and Tikhon Vialov, who knows all Peter Artamonov's secrets, and delivers judgment upon him in the last hour. Mr. Brown's translation reads very well: he is resourceful and he can write. There are minor blemishes—a few inaccuracies, and sometimes a freedom with his text which upsets the balance of Gorki's craftsmanship. "A splotch of a smile silting up the narrow eye-slits with ripples of flesh" is needlessly grotesque: one of the comparatively rare faults in a lively style. It was a pity to leave out the dedication to "Romain Rolland, man and poet."

*The Diary of a Scoundrel* (1868) was kept by Glumov, a young man who could only make his way in the world by flattering a rich kinsman, paying court to the kinsman's wife, writing pamphlets for a diehard while playing up the views of a windy liberal, and exploiting a rich widow's superstitions to marry her niece. Glumov is astute; but, as the Russian title of the play warns us, even clever men can do foolish things. The diary betrays Glumov, but he is able to convince the world that it still has need of him. This play—like Griboyedov's *Mischief of Being Clever*—is more than a comedy, because the forces that master the hero are all but tragic. Glumov is a degenerate Chatsky, critical of society, but prepared to exploit it. The diary is his one act of protest. The play, then, has a serious meaning: it is a social satire, and not a farce.

Mr. Ackland converts it into a farce. An adapter has liberties, and nobody will quarrel much with the few changes he has made in the play's construction. But should an adapter broaden its whole tone, magnify the most delicate effects, and set the characters, as it were, to grimace and wink at us? Manefa the soothsayer, for instance, is distinctly scented with vodka in the original; Mr. Ackland drenches her and has her reeling. Or consider the fate of Shmygayeva (who is only mentioned in conversation). She was run in for receiving stolen goods and poisoning a merchant. Mr. Ackland heaps further misfortunes on her: her late husband, a petty official, becomes an old clothes dealer; the merchant a commercial traveler; and now she must keep a brothel. Do modern audiences really want their comedy at this pitch?

The dialogue is spirited, and no doubt the version would act well. But for all its close resemblance in outline, it isn't the same play. Here is one minor divergence, but typical. There seems nothing remarkably funny in a man's getting the reputation of a liberal through a dispute on housing problems. But the real dispute was about trotting horses—which is a measure of Gorodulin's liberalism. Ostrovsky relied on these small touches to reveal what was in his mind. Ignore them, and the focus becomes blurred.

HENRY GIFFORD.

**The Artist and Society.** By Gino Severini. The Changing World Series. Harvill Press, London. 4s.

GINO SEVERINI endeavours in these collected essays to define the place that a progressive artist should rightly occupy in contemporary society. He discusses the position of the artist in the Soviet Union and in bourgeois societies; the attempt of the French artists in the pre-war *Maison de Culture* at what he calls "non-political collaboration" with the progressive parties and, finally, the bearing that the theories of Existentialism have on art. He is sincerely dismayed by the "crisis" in present-day culture. He feels that this can only be solved by bringing art back into close and inspiring contact with the progressive elements in contemporary social life. He speaks of the artists' need "to identify their creative activity with the deepest requirements of life," and to get into ever closer contact with the community and to "speak to others in a spirit of truth, understanding, and mutual respect. . . . Then they will

certainly be listened to by the honest and sincere. Words which are steeped in truth often have the power to reach the minds even of dishonest people or men of ill-will."

Thus invoking the spirit of truth and love in art, it is a pity that Mr. Severini should have drawn on such tainted sources for his views on art in the Soviet Union. Furthermore, his misconceptions, and therefore distorted presentation of the principles of Marxism and historical materialism invalidate his criticisms of Soviet art theory. While denouncing certain bourgeois ideas and practices in art, he himself is an apologist for those very bourgeois conceptions of art and society which serve to perpetuate the old order of things.

Severini holds conceptions that are typical of the most extreme metaphysical idealism. "We too," he writes, "can accept the Marxist idea according to which it is *being* which determines *consciousness* and not vice-versa, on condition that this formula is related to Aristotelianism and on condition that our knowledge of reality transcends the material to which the Marxists try to restrict it." "Materialism," he asserts, "cannot be accepted by the artist because the materialist solution of the dualism between the spirit and matter considers matter and not spirit to be the primordial factor."

For him "the ideas of the working classes are mainly governed by economics, and economics have never been known to influence the creative activities directly and in such a way as to cause a re-orientation of art." Such implied contempt of the masses is not unusual when combined with the lofty concepts of metaphysicians, but goes ill with protestations of brotherhood and love. In describing the position of art in the Soviet Union, he quotes manifestoes from the Constructivists, a petty bourgeois group, as an example of "proletarian ideology." He draws his facts about Soviet life from White émigré sources. He avers that "the Marxist State . . . found it simpler to subordinate the aims and 'means' of art to those of politics—which in practice meant the suppression of art." He cites the fact that Stravinsky chose to remain an émigré, but he fails to mention that Prokofiev returned to create finer works than ever before. He repeats the discredited slanders of André Gide. "Until a little while ago," he asserts, "it was forbidden to paint landscapes, still lifes, and portraits of people of non-official life" (!). Such is the picture he paints of a country where for the first time the artist has been freed of the dominance of the money bags—which Severini himself hates—and where unexampled opportunities are enjoyed for the development of art in the service of the people.

Severini does not need to rely on hearsay when he describes the position of the artist in the toils of professional art dealers in the West. He confirms that "the world of money is doubly hostile to art and culture. Anyone," he writes of his Paris days, "who remained

faithful to an independent art was more or less condemned to poverty and solitude" . . . or "if his work did not coincide with the 'line' laid down by the dealers." Severini exposes the way stocks of works are concealed, to be thrown on to the market at the appropriate moment, how trusts and corners in art works are created and prices boosted artificially. "In these speculations, the intrinsic value of the works are secondary; what mattered was their value on the market." He states that the "social conditions in which art has had to live since Renoir have now reached a culminating point beyond which art must either be annihilated (though the process may continue for some years) or else be reborn."

His discussion of the bearing of Existentialist theories on art merely lend point to this last conclusion. These theorists, typical of the crisis of Western culture, lead one, as he aptly phrases it, "to the precipice with the 'either-or' before him and the decision to make, and the only course to be chosen is the leap into the void." 'Feet first or head first' is the only choice offered the artist by the "Existentialist."

Having previously deluded himself with his own caricature of the position of the Soviet artist, it is not surprising that Mr. Severini concludes that the artist to-day is thus "left hanging in the void."

He, however, has himself stumbled across a way out of the impasse of the arts under capitalism. "The Marxists talk about the *commande sociale* (the requirements expressed by society), about art done for the proletarian masses, and so on. Many artists have seen this way out of the dilemma; and perhaps indeed it may be possible at some future date for art to develop in such a direction. I myself have developed the idea, but I must frankly admit that I do not see the possibility of its immediate realisation. Before that the masses must enter into as deep a communion as possible with culture—not with a culture abased to their level (!—J.C.), but with an organic culture such as that of the Middle Ages or that of the Greeks, which included the whole population."

Had Severini looked with clearer and less prejudiced eyes at what is happening in the Soviet Union, he would see there the possibility of thus realising the conditions for an "organic" culture in which there is no contradiction between the artist and society, in which the masses are indeed getting that deep communion with all the finest in the world of culture, and in which the *commande sociale* can indeed be fulfilled by an art reborn, and that this is a possibility offered by "socialism in our time." If Severini could see the constructive possibilities of social action as clearly as he sees the destructive actualities of capitalist reaction, he would have penned a different book. As it is he is like a man who, on a crowded thoroughfare has been jostled past the right turning which he seeks and who wanders on, lost and inquiring and increasingly bemused.

JACK CHEN.

## A Second Book of Russian Verse.

Translated into English by various hands and edited by C. M. Bowra. (Macmillan & Co. Ltd.) 10s. 6d.

THIS second book of Russian verse contains translations of poems from Lomonosov to Simonov and purports, in the words of its editor (Professor C. M. Bowra), to give "some idea of the range and variety of Russian poetry in the last hundred and fifty years."

I am afraid I cannot, in reviewing this book, discuss the translations from the point of view of their poetic content, since most of the translations read as if they were based on the assumption that poetry and versification are one and the same thing. What concerns me primarily in reviewing this book is the discovery that most of the translations suffer from a limited knowledge of Russian. I have come across other instances of this defect, which may be mainly due to the relatively poor standard of Russian scholarship in this country. What I propose to do, therefore, is to examine one of the poems in this volume from the point of view of the knowledge of the language in the hope of making plain the dangers of translating Russian poetry without an adequate knowledge of Russian.

Since most of the poems in this volume were translated by the editor, I hope he will not think me unfair if I choose one of his own translations to prove my thesis. I should like to take one of the easiest poems in the volume, Maxim Gorky's "Song of the Hawk," a poem in prose written in so simple a style that it should have been easy to avoid any misunderstanding about the meaning of a sentence in it.

Now, a careful examination of the translation of this poem has revealed no less than 62 mistranslations of the text. I am afraid I shall not be able to discuss all these errors, as such a task would be both too long and too tedious, but I shall endeavour to say a few words about some of the more glaring of them. On Page 60 we get this passage: "So the snake answered. The bird of freedom smiled in his spirit over the foolish words of the serpent, and so he pondered: Flying or crawling, the end is certain. . . . All in the earth lie, and all become dust." The Russian text, literally translated, is as follows:—"So the grass-snake answered to the free bird and it (the grass-snake, and not the falcon!) smiled in spirit at it (the falcon—*nad neyu*—fem. *phiisa*—bird) for its foolish dreams, and so it (again the grass-snake) thought: Fly or crawl, the end is known, all will lie in the earth, all will be turned to dust."

Now, I contend that it makes all the difference in the world to the meaning of Gorky's allegorical poem in prose whether it was the falcon (not hawk) or the grass-snake (not serpent or snake) who thought all this. Here we obviously have a simple



mistake in construing which gives quite a different meaning to the whole poem.

On Page 61 we get this rather obscure passage: "I should inhabit heaven, the snake thought, and pass delighted days in such doings as now he sighs for." The Russian text, literally translated, says: "But the grass-snake thought, it must indeed be pleasant to live in the sky if he (the dying falcon) utters such moans." On Page 62 we get this passage: "Then turned his glances all round the valley where eyes play ever with dreams of pleasure. What did he see there, the hawk who perished, in that waste desert, dayless, unbounded? Why do those like him, the hawk who perished, trouble their spirit with this strong passion for flight in heaven? What brightness find they? If I could only once understand it and fly in heaven for a few moments!" A literal translation of the Russian text will, I think, reveal a complete misunderstanding of this passage by the translator. "And now he glanced into the distance (i.e., the sky, not a valley that seems to have suddenly materialised in the narrow cleft of the mountains where the grass-snake was lying) which eternally caresses the eyes with the dream of happiness. And what could he have seen, the dead falcon, in this limitless desert (*bez dna* lit. bottomless—*dno*—bottom, gen. sing. *dna*, not *bez dnya*—without day, dayless—*den'*—day, gen. sing. *dnya*) and boundless? Why do such as he, dying, trouble the spirit (the grass-snake's spirit, not *their*, the falcons' spirit) by their love for flights into the sky even for a short time? What is there so clear to them there (i.e., what revelation do they find there, and not "What brightness find they")? Why, even I could surely understand it, if I flew up into the sky for a few moments (and not "If I could only once understand it and fly in heaven for a few moments," which makes little sense).

Further, on Page 63: "Birds, silly creatures! Knowing the earth not, longing for heaven, they hurry upward, aloft towards it, and seek to live there in a hot desert. 'Tis only desert, 'tis only light there, nothing to keep life for a live body." Again the literal translation: "Ridiculous birds! Not knowing the earth and feeling unhappy upon it (*na ney toskuya*: *nyebo* heaven is neuter, and if the meaning of the sentence had been "longing for heaven," it should have been *na* (really *po*) *nyom* and not *na ney*), they strive to fly high up in the sky and search for life in the hot desert. There is nothing but emptiness there. There is a great deal of light there, but there is no food, nor any support for a living body (not "nothing to keep life in a live body": the grass-snake is thinking of itself and it can only climb up by clinging to something").

Page 64: "As for their challenge, I disbelieve it. Earth is creation, Earth's life sufficient." Literal translation: "Their calls I shall never believe. A creature of the earth, I live by the earth." Where does the translator get the line, "Earth is creation"? The text says: "*Zemlee* (gen.) and not *zemlya* (nom.) *tvorenye*." On the same

and the next page: "With lion bellow songs rang and thundered the proud bird's glory, and the rocks shivered beneath their onslaught; and the sky shivered from the fierce singing: Of gallant frenzy, we sing the glory! In gallant frenzy is life's true wisdom. O hawk undaunted, fighting your foeman, in blood you perished. . . . A time is coming when blood shed by you will burn and glitter and flame like flashes into life's darkness, and many gallant hearts will be flaming, frenzied and thirsty, O world of freedom! Though you have perished, in songs of courage and in brave spirits you will be always a living pattern, a haughty summons to life, to freedom! Of gallant frenzy we sing the glory!"

Literal translation: "In their lion-like roar (i.e., in the lion-like roar of the waves) thundered the song about the proud bird, the rocks trembled from their blows (i.e., the blows of the waves), the sky trembled from the defiant song: To the folly of the brave we sing the glory! The folly of the brave—that is life's wisdom. O brave falcon! In the fight with your enemies you have shed your blood and perished. But the time will come and the drops of your hot blood will flash like sparks in the darkness of life, and many brave hearts will be kindled with the mad thirst for freedom and light (*bezumnoy zhazhday svobody*, *svyeta*—*svyeta*—of light—i.e., enlightenment, and not *svyet*, meaning world: where does the translator get the invocation, O World?). You may be dead. . . . But in the song of those who are brave and strong in spirit (*v pesnye smyelykh ee silnykh dukhom*—does not mean "in songs of courage and in brave spirits") you will always remain a living example, a call to the brave to freedom, to light (why "to life, to freedom?"). To the folly of the brave we sing the song!"

I forbear to comment on the stilted pseudo-poetic style of the translation of this very simple poem in prose, on lines like "knowing the earth not," or "'Tis only desert, 'tis only light there," or "And pass delighted days in such doings as now he sighs for," or "nothing to keep life in a live body," or "fighting your foeman (incidentally, for some obscure reason most of the translators in this book prefer 'foeman' to 'enemy')," or indeed almost every other line in this poem which stultifies and distorts the marvellously taut texture of Gorky's prose.

I should like, in conclusion, to ask the "various hands," as the title page refers to them, a simple question: do they really believe that what they write is, say, the authentic voice of Pushkin? They must do. Why else should the late Professor Elton have spent so much time and labour in translating Pushkin and missing the only important thing in Pushkin's poetry—Pushkin?

A classic example of this will be found in this volume. Pushkin's famous line, *Tam russky dukh . . . tam russyu pakhnnet* appears in Elton's translation as "There, the true Russian scent is floating!" Did Professor Elton know that this simple line is one of

the most famous lines in Pushkin's poetry, or did he realise how ridiculous his own version of the line is? I wonder.

Surely, it is preferable that Pushkin or any other great Russian poet should remain untranslated, at least until the standard of Russian scholarship in this country improves and until real poets realise the great treasures that lie hidden in the vast field of

Russian poetry and take the trouble to learn Russian thoroughly not only in search of new themes for their own poetry, but also to give the English reader a chance of enjoying good translations of the Russian poets. For a good translation of a poem is as much a work of art as an original poem.

DAVID MAGARSHACK.

## Books Received

*The inclusion of books in this list does not preclude a detailed review in future issues.*

**Tales of the late Ivan Petrovich Beilkin.** A. S. Pushkin. (Basil Blackwell. 7s. 6d.).

**U.S.S.R. A Concise Handbook.** Edited E. J. Simmons. (Cornell University Press, London. Geoffrey Cumberlege. 25s.).

**Six Centuries of Russo-Polish Relations.**—W. P. & Z. Coates. (Lawrence & Wishart. 21s.).

**Calendar of Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, 1917-1941.**—Compiled by J. Degras. (Royal Inst. of International Affairs. 18s.).

**Russia Goes to School.**—B. King. (W. Heinemann. 10s. 6d.).

**Dostoyevsky.**—S. Mackiewica. (Orbis, London Ltd. 12s. 6d.).

**The Train.**—V. Panova. (Putnam & Co. Ltd. 9s. 6d.).

**How to Stop the Russians Without War.**—F. Sternberg. (T. V. Boardman & Co. Ltd. 7s. 6d.).

**Essays from Tula.**—L. Tolstoy. (Sheppard Press. 12s. 6d.).

**Russian Tales for Children.**—A. Tolstoy. (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. 7s. 6d.).

**Soviet Cinema.**—Thorold Dickinson and Catherine de la Roche. (The Falcon Press. 12s. 6d.).

**Inquest on an Ally.**—Paul Winterton. (Cresset Press. 12s. 6d.).

Mention of a book in this list does not preclude review in a later issue of the "Anglo-Soviet Journal."

## Correction

We regret that in the last issue the name of Mr. Maurice Dobb's recent book was wrongly given in our review and list of contents. It should read: "Soviet Economic Development Since 1917." (Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd. 18s.).



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By

T. D. LYSENKO

A REPORT TO THE LENIN  
ACADEMY OF AGRICULTURAL  
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# 2/6

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*Above: An evening gown of white crêpe georgette and black taffeta, with a trimming of artificial wild flowers in yellow. Designed by N. Makarova, of the Moscow Model House.*

*Below: Pyjamas of thin pale blue woollen cloth. The cut of the blouse is reminiscent of a man's Ukrainian shirt, with the embroidery replaced by a navy blue woollen applique. Designed by the Leningrad Model House.*





*Left: Two children's frocks with cut and trimming reminiscent of Russian folk costumes. Designed by Vysheslavtseva, of the Moscow Model House.*



*Above: Dark-red woollen skating suit trimmed with grey embroidery and fur. Designed by Kostrikova, of the Moscow Model House.*



*Left: A yellow-spun silk dress embroidered with designs from the Tatar Republic, done in brown wool. Designed by Gavrilova, of the Kazan Model House.*





## Pictures from the M.A.T. Exhibition

*Above: The Art Theatre's first company.*

*Below: Scene from Uncle Vanya, Chekov, 1899.*





Above: Scene from *"The Lower Depths,"* Maxim Gorki, 1902,



Right: D. Orlov as the doctor's assistant Ivan Globa, from Simonov's *"The Russians."*





*Above: Students at the State Institute of Dramatic Art.  
Below: Director Ivan Bersenev (left) directs students of the Institute.*





*Two more pictures of students  
at the State Institute of  
Dramatic Art.*







## Reconstruction in the U.S.S.R.

*The whole of the great city of Minsk had been reduced to ruins like this when the Red Army liberated the city in July, 1944.*

*Below: One of the new apartment blocks that has arisen on the ruins of Minsk.*





## Reconstruction in the U.S.S.R.

*Above: Another street in reconstructed Minsk.*

*Below: A residential settlement for workers of the Minsk automobile plant.*

